

THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF CLEVERNESS

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
The Purple Border	Beatrix Demarest Lloyd 1
In the Silence	Arthur Davison Ficke 43
The Writ of Habeas Corpus	William Hamilton Osborne 44
When the Girls Came out to Play	Dorothea Deakin 52
A Christening Robe	Mabel Earle 59
A Matter of Habit	Ludwig Lewisohn 60
Ballade of a Summer Day	Ernest McGaffey 67
The Seven Stairs	Florence Wilkinson 68
The Parables of Aissa	Dorothea MacKellar 70
Mr. Machiavelli, Jr.	W. Carey Wonderly 71
Life-Hunger	Arthur Stringer 79
Concerning Debt	Charles Battell Loomis 80
A Song of Lovelace	Theodosia Garrison 81
Made in Heaven	J. J. Bell 82
A Blow-Out	Tom Masson 83
Bohemia, New York	Richard Duffy 84
A Road Song	Mary Lowell 88
The Final Hour	Katharine Metcalf Roof 89
Sexton and His Stowaway	J. Sackville Martin 98
In Two Thousand and Five	Harold Eyre 127
Eunice	Anna McClure Sholl 128
Le Sacrifice	Jean Reibrach 136
The Closed Door	Mary Glascock 139
The Lesser Stain	Leila Burton Wells 145
As Told by Renaud's Wife	Anne Warner 155
Ballade of the One True Love	Gordon Wilson 160

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THE AUGUST "SMART SET"

An unusual novel that will be certain to attract many readers will open the forthcoming issue. It is a story dealing with double identity, and no reader will lay it aside until the unexpected denouement is reached.

"THE WHITE CAT," By Gelett Burgess

A number of striking short stories will likewise appear and the editor has endeavored to make them cover the widest possible range. Among the contributors may be mentioned Edna Kenton, Inez Haynes Gillmore, Temple Bailey, Katharine La Farge Norton, Anne Warner, Ludwig Lewisohn, Constance Smedley and Frances Aymar Mathews.

The essay will be by Alvan F. Sanborn, entitled, "The French Talent for Living," and there will be delightful poems by Madison Cawein, Ethel M. Kelley, Florence Brooks, Frank L. Stanton, Edwin L. Sabin and Duncan Campbell Scott.

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THE PURPLE BORDER

By Beatrix Demarest Lloyd

DENNIS—his full name had fallen so long ago into disuse that it would be needless to record it—was of the rarely tender and omniscient type of servant that overlooks nothing except the inevitable transition in the master's condition from childhood to the years commonly accredited with discretion. And Dennis, had anyone charged him with the folly of considering Michael Derevaragh, *æstat* thirty-five, as under precisely the same authoritative control that he had exercised over Michael Derevaragh, *æstat* eleven, he would have unwaveringly maintained that the man knew quite as little how to care for himself as the boy had known. Nor can it be said that Dennis could not to a certain degree have substantiated his contention!

There was latent in his mild Irish voice the suggestion of his authority, and expression of his disapproval of Derevaragh's occupation, when he came to the door that, in their little house, separated his kitchen from his master's room, to remind him that it was Wednesday and supper time, and that Wednesday at supper time one might with reasonable accuracy predict the arrival of Father Ferbane and his appreciative appetite.

The room at whose threshold Dennis was standing was marked as incontestably as its occupant with the unusual charm of simplicity. A low-beamed ceiling, white plastered walls and white wooden floor formed the canvas of the picture. For the rest, it was drawn in simple lines, the lack of ornament amounting quite to bareness. A curious storage for books,

July 1906—1

three shelves at first an easy shoulder height, ran completely around the rather long room, broken in upon by windows and the like. On Dennis's left hand, and at right angles to the door where he stood, was a slightly larger door, giving upon the small, square hallway. To his right spread the great chimney-place, in which Derevaragh, though a tall man, could have stood upright or lain down for the night without any danger from the fire that burned moodily upon its blackened stones.

Opposite the chimney were two stout windows, curtainless, and beneath each stood a plain wooden settle and a flower-box full of glowing plant-life. Two or three well-worn simple chairs were gathered about in the centre of the room, near a large, finely carved bogwood table, fantastically out of place and strangely at home in its bare surroundings. This table was also covered with books, books of a serious appearance, books easily recognizable as the torches and weapons of the world's forward struggle. It was upon these books, and especially upon the one that his master, who sat before the chimney-place, held spread open before him, that the disapproving look of Dennis was directed.

"And you'd be reading by the light of the evening star, I don't doubt, if I did not bring you candles!" he complained, with an odd mixture of contempt and admiration.

Derevaragh lifted his head, and let the book drop a little, with an indulgent laugh. "I did not realize how dim the page had grown, Dennis," he said. "Does it still rain as hard as ever?"

"If Noah was alive, he'd be pestering around out here building an ark," said Dennis. "You'll be after hearing the drumming on the panes when you're fair awake." He lifted the candles from the stone ledge of the chimney and set them on the table to light them. "Do you think it likely now his reverence will be out the night?"

"Extremely improbable," replied the other. "Certainly, if he does come, Dennis, it will be your excellence and not mine that brings him." His voice was clear and of an excellent carrying quality, for all that he spoke with a rare quietude, and it had the breadth and depth of true Irish timbre, and in spite of the refinement of his enunciation enough of the melodious accent to announce unmistakably his extraction.

Dennis, having lighted the candles with old, unsteady hands, turned to look at his master in the better light. "'Tis the Blarney stone you must have been taken to kiss when you were a wee spalpeen," he said fondly.

His old eyes lingered upon the face of the man. As a whole, the face was a thin one, though broadened by heavy bones, and varying earnestness and laughter had marked it with deep lines. Under the heavy brows, which gave the look of brooding benevolence, his large eyes were of that green shot with yellow which appears to be gray, and is yet sometimes easily mistaken for blue when an emotion darkens the iris. He had a way when he laughed or smiled of spreading the lids wider instead of closing them to a mere line in the usual manner, which gave his expression of amusement a peculiar illumination, so that his face fairly shone with a brightness in his sudden flashes of appreciation. His hair was of a reddish brown, with one wide lock, at the left temple, of silvery whiteness, that caught one's attention with all the persistence of a scar, and was constantly bringing itself into greater prominence by falling forward over his forehead.

It was a face no one had ever ignored

—not even children, who usually smiled at it, in their instinctive recognition of the youthful soul behind the eyes. It was the face of a thinker, but of the kindly, hopeful, helpful thinker, who radiates geniality, courtesy, cheer, good humor and love of life. Here was no pessimist, dubiously regarding the decay of some golden era of his retrospective imagination, no mournful prophet of retributive justice. He was aglow with the hope of every man, of every step in the creating of the world; he would no more have admitted the retrogression of humanity than he would have said because darkness followed the daylight, the world was turning backward in its course. His eyes, undimmed by hypocrisy and self-love and blindfolded by no scarf of conventionality, comprehended the larger plan of progress in which individual lives are merely the microscopic detail.

It is not to be supposed that all this was visible or even known to Dennis. He saw in the face the beloved of his humble years, and looked no farther.

"You'll take your supper now, without waiting longer for his reverence?"

Derevaragh rose, tall and lean, against the gray stones of his chimney. "I'll take it now, Dennis. I don't think he will come on so bad a night." He laid the book he was holding down upon some others on the table, and began to pile those at one side to the other.

A slow change came into Dennis's old eyes. "Will you not be trusting me to move the books, Mr. Michael?"

Michael left the task unfinished, and, turning, laid his hands on the servant's shoulders. "You must remember, Dennis," he said with a quizzical brightness in his eyes, "that the only reason you serve me, the only reason why you do not usurp my position and put me into yours, is because you have sense enough to see that I am not fit to be a servant." He held him so an instant longer, smiling down at him. Then he turned again to the table and the books. "But where I can in my clumsy way aid you, you must let me."

Dennis was respectfully submissive, but entirely unconvinced. "It is not work for an Aughrun," he muttered, as he went back into his kitchen, but Derevaragh heard him and he laughed. "What is work for a man, is work for a man," he answered, raising his voice but little, that its wonderful carrying quality might penetrate into the farther room.

It was evident that here was a subject on which the two were ever at odds. Dennis was still turning it over in his mind when he came back with his tray. "What is work for a man is not so sure to be work for the master," he said doggedly, as he unfolded the cloth and spread it over the unburdened end of the table.

Derevaragh sighed. "Don't you be an anachronism, Dennis!" he said. "We are getting beyond all that. You will be left behind with the kings and queens if you don't keep up."

Dennis laid the solitary cover in silence, and then picking up his tray went back toward the door. "Learning is a strange thing," he said in the old admixture of disparagement and approbation. "You would do better and be happier staying at home and minding your own affairs than in stramming around the world uncovering other people's troubles."

Derevaragh, standing with his back to the little fire, laughed again. The phrase brought him face to face with an inestimable opportunity for the confession he had been intending to make for many days, an announcement he felt certain would bring down upon him Dennis's dreaded displeasure. He went on smiling in his solitude during the man's momentary absence, just to assure himself that there was no reason in his hesitation. But, as a matter of fact, Dennis's authority was almost as convincing to others as to himself.

When he returned with the simple parts of the evening meal, Derevaragh gave himself away bravely. "I'm sorry you don't approve of my traveling about," he said, quite docilely, "for I have to tell you that I am going away again very soon!"

Dennis was thunderstruck. "Going away?" he cried out. "Going away again? Why, sir, you've no more than come home!" He stood, the picture of amazement and distress, a dish in either hand suspended on its journey to the table, and his face wrinkled into a thousand lines. Derevaragh nodded humbly. "It does seem so, Dennis. That's true for you."

"Seem so!" grunted Dennis, recovering from his unguarded position. "You have been back in Ireland just three weeks, and one week of that you were away from here bothering with coöperative creameries and the Lord only knows what!" He finished his task in an injured silence, and stepped back that Derevaragh might sit down in the chair he had drawn toward the savory supper. "I don't understand you, at all at all, Mr. Michael," he said then sadly. "You seem a kind-hearted boy, but your actions are heartless, I must say that. It may be that you have no great appreciation of your own old country, but you might at least be hesitating to leave your poor old uncle when he may die at any moment."

Derevaragh, who had evinced nothing but a willingness to admit himself the most abandoned nomad of all mankind, could not quite accept this last. "Dennis! Dennis!" he cried, laughing as he fell into his chair, "the greater the distance between Uncle Cormac and me, the greater his chances of a long life. I have never seen him but twice —the first time he ordered me out of the house, and the second time, years later, he so choked with his rage at seeing me that I had to pound him on the back."

Dennis could not but smile reminiscently. "And the harder you pounded, you broth of a spalpeen, the more he choked! I mind the time."

"Well, then," said his master, finding matters going much more easily than he had expected, "when you hold up Uncle Cormac as an influence upon my wanderings, why, the farther I go the better, is the answer I make you."

The old man's expressive face sobered again. "Tis not so much that

he would want you, Mr. Michael, dear, but that you'd be needed afterward, in case——”

“Who will need me, Dennis?” he inquired, confidently. “Sure, there's family enough to bury him. What's the matter with my brother Will? Or Cousin Cormac? Or——”

“It may have slipped your mind,” broke in Dennis, with the sarcastic forbearance of one who brings forward matters of indisputable importance, “as being a trifle it naturally would, that, when your old Uncle Cormac draws his last breath—God rest his soul!—you'll draw your first as Earl of Aughrun—you remember now, perhaps?”

Derevaragh looked up gravely, and then his eyes, passing from Dennis, stared at the blind square of darkness that was the window. “Yes, I remember that,” he said slowly.

Dennis waited in patient silence while the other gathered himself again and turned his wandering attention to the neglected supper. Then, “Do you think you should be stramming about the world, with him so bad?” he pushed his inquiry.

“I must go,” said Michael Derevaragh, quietly.

The old wrinkled face of the servant showed in its pain that he had been made to realize the immutability of the decision. “Where then?” he ventured.

“The States,” said Derevaragh.

“Across the water!” cried the old man in new distress.

Derevaragh looked up again. “How old am I?” he inquired with a fond severity.

“But what will you be doing across the water?” begged Dennis. “Mr. Michael, dear, is there not trouble and poverty enough on this side of the world for ye?”

Derevaragh smiled indulgently.

“Sure, there must be enough to amuse you, sir, what with your butteries and embroideries and societies and writing of books!” the old man insisted.

“I shall not be gone long,” said the other, gently. “Four months at most.

An Aughrun must keep his word, must he not?” he added craftily. “I promised to go. I am going to tell them all about this co-operative industry that you so slightly call butter and embroidery.”

“Have they read your books over there, Mr. Michael?”

“Yes,” admitted Derevaragh, feeling for a moment as abashed as a little boy with a medal.

“And isn't that enough for them?”

“It seems not!” he laughed.

There was a long silence between them then, while the master ate appreciatively of the simple supper, and the old servant stood by watching every motion of his hands, with an eye that saw nothing but the vista of lonely days ahead for him.

Presently his dissatisfaction became again articulate. “'Tis a strange thing you should be so dissatisfied with the world as the good God made it,” he grumbled. “Mark my words, Mr. Michael, you'll never see it any better. Did not the Lord himself say, ‘the poor ye have always with you’?” There was a triumphant look in his faded eyes that did not escape his listener.

“That is not what is the matter with the world, Dennis,” he said, half smiling, half frowning. “I think it would be better if we were all poor, as was the ‘Lord himself.’ The trouble is not that ‘the poor ye have always with you,’ but that the rich ye have ever against you.”

And Dennis, having, as he was forced to confess, no retort for this blow to his argument, had to content himself with gathering the empty dishes into his tray again, while Derevaragh's eyes returned to their staring at the blind square of darkness that was the window, and became oblivious of both his presence and departure.

Left alone, Derevaragh slowly aroused from his absorption. His eyes, falling from their sightless uplift toward the night, sought about the wonderful table for his needs. Among the uppermost books lay his own latest effort at expression. He drew it toward him with an almost reluctant hand, opened

it, looked into it, closed it, and pushed it away from him with a sigh. He remembered that Clemenceau had written him that such books as this would be laid in the corner-stone of the new heaven and the new earth which should not pass away. But he himself knew how far short of his urgent desire the work had fallen. He himself knew how untiringly his mind sought better expression of his belief, more convincing arguments for the awakening of the world to the imperative need of united effort, more inspiring encouragement to urge onward the army of the brotherhood. With his brows drawn down into a network of lines that spoke intention, doubt, and fearlessness, he opened a drawer at his hand and took from it the fragmentary manuscript of his projected successor to the unsatisfactory volume.

For a time he merely turned and returned the pages, frowning at some, almost content with others; then, with almost a dash of his hand, he plunged his pen into ink and began to write. For an hour, perhaps, his pen hurried along, covering page after page with his delicate, quaint writing, and then more and more flaggishly the words seemed to be forced into the black and white medium through which he spoke to his great audiences. More and more slowly appeared the tracery upon the page, until at last as if powerless longer to continue, he laid down the pen and let it roll away.

Then, with his chin upon his breast and his clasped hands hanging lax between his knees, he sat motionless, without sight or hearing; for, in his unusual power of concentration, his thought, in its goaded search within him for the eloquence that should unfailingly stimulate his readers, left his senses unattended, as one who should leave a house in going out of doors.

So he neither listened to the persistent, capable strumming of the chill Summer rain at his windows, nor watched the dwindling candles wave their long-neglected flames. Nor, later, when the more unusual sounds of voices in the hall, one petulant and yet

subdued, the other amazed yet deferential, assailed his ears, was he aware of any other thing beyond the blank, white page before him, and the lethargy of the selfish world he tried to rouse.

Dennis, who had come to the door, hesitated when he saw his master's absorption. It was evident that under no ordinary circumstances would he have dared disturb the brooding silence. It was also evident that this was no ordinary occasion, for there was a positive sparkle of animation in the filmy old eyes of Dennis that did not escape even the slow-recovering consciousness of Derevaragh, when, as the servant ventured forward and touched him on the arm, he raised his eyes as if from a long sleep.

"What's amiss, Dennis?"

The old man moistened his lips.
"Tis your brother, sir; Mr. Will."

"Here?" said Derevaragh, very quickly sitting erect.

Dennis expeditiously nodded before he could reply, "Here, and drenched with the rain he is, too. He's after going up to your room, sir, to put on something dry, though the Blessed Virgin only knows what he'll find! He said he would be down directly."

Derevaragh, staring, pushed his papers into a stack, and slipped them into a drawer. "Well, this is surprising," he said. As he slowly rose, the servant's agitation vented itself in a dry little cough, very much as a dog under similar excitement might have barked. "Mr. Will brings you some news, my lord," he said, trembling.

Derevaragh straightened, stood, and stared again. "What?" he said. His voice sounded inattentive, yet he had heard.

"My lord," repeated the old man, and then gently struck his trembling hands together. "God rest the dead, Mr. Michael, but it's a brave day for me to see you lord of Aughrun at last! Faith, I had begun to think the old earl would last me out indeed!" Then as the other continued silently to eye him—it seemed to Dennis with a look that questioned his very sanity—he shook his head, and added, "It's not

soft in the head I am, Mr. Michael. Your Uncle Cormac has passed into glory, God rest his soul."

Derevaragh seemed at last to believe him. "Now, Dennis, don't be a fool," he said almost briskly. "You know I can't have this kind of thing!" He closed the drawer that held his writing as he spoke.

Dennis backed away toward the door, bewildered.

"You ought to know me better by now," Derevaragh went on, hardly realizing the heat with which he spoke, "than to think I'd let anybody dump an earldom down on me. Haven't I been all my life clearing away complications? And do you suppose I'm going to let anybody put me back to the very beginning—back, much farther back than the very beginning?"

Though Dennis lost much of the meaning of this speech, which, after all, was not addressed to him but to the speaker, nevertheless he caught the general drift of it, and smiled again in all his wrinkles as he laid his hands upon the knob. "You cannot help it, Mr. Michael, sir," he said; "the earldom is sitting on you now."

Derevaragh made a sudden movement of his shoulders, flinging them back as if to rid himself of a burden. And Dennis, interpreting the motion, came back toward him, his smile fading. "Ah, no, now, Mr. Michael dear, you'll not be doing anything so silly?" he pleaded. "It's the grand lord you'll be making, tall and straight as ye stand. You're an Aughrun if ever there was one, and a proud man you ought to be to bear the name. Faith, it always should have been your father's, for your uncle was no lord that anybody could be proud of, saving your presence. And I have prayed for you to have it, my lord, before I died, that I might see you——"

"Enough, enough!" cried Derevaragh, laughing. "I feel you riveting the coronet on me with your 'lords.' 'Tis a curious thing what burdens a man will assume and call them blessings! Can you see a horse taking pride in his hobbles? There—about with

you. Go see if Mr. Will has what he wants. I'll wait him here."

Dennis, speechless, uneasy, very evidently of the opinion that his master was a most unsatisfactory lunatic, went slowly and despondently away, and Derevaragh assumed his old attitude before the fire, drawn to his full height against the gray background of heavy stones.

His deeply-set, brilliant eyes looked slowly about the plain, good room. So Dennis, though he knew so well how irksome was the responsibility of even this simplicity, expected him to encumber himself with a castle, and, though he had learned so well the belief in equality that ruled his heart, expected him to seize upon a title, to exalt himself with empty honors!

What a pity Dennis was so mistakenly devoted to him—or was it that he was devoted to Dennis? If it were not for Dennis, why, bless his soul, he need not have possessed a chair or table in the world! But he caught himself back from the thought, as it seemed a disloyalty to the little house that had so faithfully sheltered him and his books. Though he cared so little to possess, there was at times a comforting satisfaction in being possessed, in being welcomed and warmed, in giving one's self to the encircling protection of familiar walls. It was true that, in spite of the fact that, left to himself, he probably should not have possessed it at all, the place was dear to him.

The daring plainness of the room was quite like the look of the man himself, direct, satisfactory, without any ornament save its tranquillity. And the fitness of the man to his surroundings was evident even to the rather undiscerning eye of his brother, as he presently entered, in a hastily contrived costume of Dennis's devising. It would be a strain on the ingenuity of any servant, no matter how resourceful, to fit out an unexpected visitor from the wardrobe of a master who kept little more than a change of clothing and only one coat. But the many incongruities of the toilet were hidden

by the long dressing-gown the newcomer wore, so much the longer for him than for its owner that it fell on the ground all about him and made him look a child masquerading in men's clothes.

The impression of boyishness was carried farther by the fresh rosiness of his cheeks and the bigness of his blue eyes. His mouth was large and made for laughter, and for no other reason than its amazing aptitude in this art would anybody suppose he had been laughing through the world for thirty years.

Derevaragh went toward him with a great welcome in his outstretched hands, and his face shining toward the other's smile. "Well, Will lad!"

"Well, Derry! Did Dennis tell you the news?"

"Ah, from his face, I think I must have told him some! So Uncle Cormac is dead at last."

"His old podagrous heart has ceased to beat," said Will, quietly, going to the fire. After standing there a moment, he dropped into the chair his brother had vacated. "I left the castle just as soon as I could get away, caught a train, and drove over here from Mountrath in an open cart. And I'm that hungry, Derry, it would turn a stone to bread. I'm hoping you make more provision for unexpected brothers in your larder than you do in your wardrobe!"

"How very stupid of me now, not to have thought of it!" cried Michael, starting toward the kitchen with a frown. But just at the door he stopped and turned back smiling. "Dennis has, however!" he said, triumphant in his servant's perfection. "I heard the sound of china on a tray." He began enlarging the old space on the table among the books. "Ah, what must it not be, never to have to say, 'I wish I had thought of that!' I verily believe Dennis is the only man I ever saw who could boast such a record!" Just to refresh himself with the sight of such a paragon, he stepped to the kitchen door, opened it a trifle and looked in.

"In just one moment, my lord!" came the attentive cry.

And Will Derevaragh laughed. "He's got it pat already," he said. And then reduced his expansive mouth to a decorous droop. "Poor Uncle Cormac," he said decently.

"Why pity Uncle Cormac?" inquired Derevaragh, quietly. "He had a long life and a merry one, which cannot be said of any of his three wives."

Will looked up at him with amusement. "'Tis the hard-hearted heir-at-law you do make," he said.

"Nonsense!" Derevaragh leaned to drop a little more fuel on the fire. "I'm glad he's dead, and so are you. And so, probably, for that matter, is he."

"You might have a little decency about proclaiming it!"

"Decency! 'Tis common humanity. He was suffering the accumulated stomach-aches of all his indigestible dinners. His doctors ought to have ended him long ago. If he had been a dog, humane persons would have been writing letters to the *Times* about the wickedness of maintaining him in his agony."

"It's my turn to say nonsense now!" laughed Will, tolerantly.

Derevaragh nodded. "I know," he assented moodily, staring down at the quickening blaze. "That's why we don't get on faster with the making of the world—one man speaks, and another man speaks, and they both bawl 'Nonsense!' and go their old ways."

"And are you still trying to make the world over, Derry?" asked Will, with an affectionate smile, half amusement and half admiration. He laid his head back against the high support of the chair to look at the other. Derevaragh dropped a hand to his shoulder and patted it, as one would caress a child.

"I don't seem to accomplish anything, I know," he said. "It seems very puny and futile, even to me."

The shadow of a quick contrition blotted out the light of Will's smile. "I didn't mean it so," he said earnestly.

"What you are doing is splendid; you know it is. Everybody says so. I saw Plunkett only last week, and he said some things about you I would hardly dare tell you. Moreover," with his inevitable twist into whimsicality, "even I, Will Derevaragh, who once had a fame of my own about town, am coming to be known, and introduced even, as 'the brother of the man who wrote 'The Augean Stable.'" Could you ask better evidence of the esteem in which you are held?"

"I'm not working for esteem—for results!" said Derevaragh, more lightly, turning away as he heard the kitchen door opening again.

Dennis came carefully in, bearing a tray whose horizontal expanse was well balanced by the tall silhouette of a long-necked wine bottle. His master faced about again, and leaned against the chimney-place, eying the old man with a proud delight. "Did I not tell you he thinks of everything?" he said, dropping a short glance on his brother. "Even, I'll warrant you, to the best wine in the house."

Dennis put the tray down on the table with his inevitable slow precision. "'Tis a day for good wine, my lord," he said.

Derevaragh laughed. "Let us drink and be merry, for Uncle Cormac is dead! There is no hypocrisy here, Will. Look upon him and learn."

"You are positively revolting," said Will, turning himself and his chair about to face the table, "in your selfish satisfaction."

Dennis began opening the bottle of wine and Michael never took his eyes from the dexterous old hands, as he answered, "Selfish? Upon my soul, the most unselfish emotion I ever had, for his going puts a lot of extra trouble and annoyance on my shoulders. I should resent being so put upon if it were not for his relief from suffering, and the delight you and Dennis take in the occasion. Dennis, Dennis," he broke off suddenly, and his voice sounded triumphant, though he had but so recently been bragging of the old servant's infallibility, "for once I have

caught you in a blunder! You have brought only two glasses!"

Dennis wiped the neck of the bottle carefully and laid down the napkin. "Sure, my lord," he replied, his old eyes twinkling and his wrinkles very deep indeed, "I was afraid it was you who wouldn't think of it. And rather than seem to suggest it to you, my lord, I brought my glass in my pocket!" And here he produced it dramatically, while both his idols flung back their heads and laughed.

"And so," said Dennis, trembling and aglow with this appreciation, pouring a little wine into his own glass first, "I am to have a taste of this bottle that I've saved so long! Why, Mr. Will," he said, leaning both hands for a moment on the table opposite his delighted listener, who was in a fair way to choke himself with his food, "when we first came here to live, after we finally persuaded him, you know"—he waved his hand impersonally toward Derevaragh—"to give up living like a gypsy and to have a roof over him at night, I brought this bottle myself under my coat all the way from Aughrun—the very finest wine it was in all the cellar, you may be sure),"—he whispered parenthetically as he filled the three thirsty glasses, "and I said to myself, 'Dennis,' says I, 'there'll come a fine day when you'll fetch this bottle up to this room and open it and if it is so minded that you shall have a taste of it, too, you'll lift your glass like this, Dennis,' I says, 'and you'll drink to the new Lord of Aughrun.'"

"With all my heart," said Derevaragh, lifting his glass. "And Will may drink to the old one."

Dennis drained his glass with a delighted smile and put it down upon the table. "'Tis good wine," he said. "I hope it will bring you a change of heart, Mr. Michael."

Derevaragh pushed the wine bottle nearer to the old man. "Have another glass, Dennis," he said, smiling too, "and may it break you of the bad habit of wishing me ill."

But Dennis shook his head, and

backed away toward his kitchen door. "I'll be after leaving you to talk over your new fortunes," he said. "For just to call one of you 'My Lord' is wine enough for me."

II

DEREVARAGH drew another chair near to the fire, and took up his wine-glass from the table. He watched his younger brother foraging with much delight in the good things spread before him.

"I'm thinking it was good of you to come yourself all the way from Aughrun, this bad evening," he said presently.

Will laughed. "I was afraid you'd be making away with yourself when you hear the news," he answered. "I thought it wisest to break it to you myself. What is it the poem says, 'The wild hawk of the desert was caught and caged at last'?"

"You'll not have been reading a book, Will?" cried Michael.

"But one," the other reassured him with a beaming look, drinking deep of his wine.

Derevaragh turned his glass about in his two hands, and looked back at the fire. "You were right, lad," he said after a silence. "I am thinking of making away with myself."

"'Tis not in that mood you'll be doing it. I am not afraid." Will turned a bit to look at him as he stretched forth his hand toward the bottle. "Though sure I am amazed at the quiet way you take it," he commented.

Michael Derevaragh met his glance. "I'm thinking, too, that the Lord of Aughrun needs a wife," he went on calmly.

The younger man's face suddenly shone with genial appreciation. "And is that what you call making away with yourself?" he laughed. "I wonder a man with as little sense as you could be my brother!"

"Don't hurry me along, boy. I said nothing of the kind. Do you ever hope to see me married?"

Will looked grave in a moment, puzzled, and disappointed.

"Do you expect," went on Michael, "ever to see me encumbered with an eternal reason for living in a house, for wasting precious time on purposeless relations with unproductive neighbors? Man, man, have you and Dennis and all the rest of you not argued with me, threatened me, and secretly despised me all these years to better purpose? Did you not have to force upon me the possession of this one plain room? I didn't want it! And I don't want a wife!" he added with a twisting smile.

"I've been thinking as I came along," said Will, eying his wine seriously, "how you would take it. For certainly it will be going against all the humors of your life. But I do hope, Derry, to see you married and with a new little Lord of Aughrun on your knees, and more shame to me if I didn't!"

"You'd make a nice lord yourself, lad," said Derevaragh, looking at him out of the corner of his eye. "You have a pretty wife, and two pretty children, and you like to live in a house and welcome to it all the drones in the parish."

Will, with a piece of bread, made a gesture of superior wisdom. "One must be decent," he said.

"Not I!" snapped Derevaragh, and then he laughed. "'Tis not being decent to them that would irk me, I'm sure, but the wasting hours at their stagnant dinner-tables, profaning the welcome I give my fellow-workmen by extending it to them as well."

Will turned his chair to the fire at last. He drew the long dressing-gown over his knees, and slipped down in the chair until his curls rested upon the smooth, curving back. "You have the making of a fair unpopular lord," he said, and he sighed with regret for his brother's future, and content of his inner man, in one breath.

"It's no lord at all I'll be making, lad," said Michael quietly. "'Tis you will have to do it."

"Do what?"

"Be Lord of Aughrun," explained the other and then put out a detaining hand. "There, don't get up, lad. You looked so comfortable."

But Will had not enough control to obey this pleading command. "What are you talking of?" he demanded, sitting erect.

"Just that the wild hawk of the desert, as you call me, and many thanks to you, I'm sure, refuses to be caught and caged. No man can make an earl of me--let him try. I've been working all my life to be a free man, and it's not so easy when you're born in captivity. But I see the open now, and no man shall get a net around me more."

"Derry!" cried Will, and could say no more.

Derevaragh had risen, in his earnestness, and now put his wine-glass down upon the table with a snap. "Have you as little understanding of my ambition as has Dennis?" he asked, with ever so faint a trace of bitterness in his tone. "Does it so amaze you that the belief and faith and hope I have held to all my life can endure the shock of a coronet tossed at its foundations? Did you think my convictions were just words? Did you believe I was going to give up my pilgrim teaching to lap my body in silken raiment and sit with the bishops at ease? Do I mean nothing to you, lad, except an eccentric brother with nothing to do but dream dreams and see visions?"

But Will had jumped to his feet in a fine rage, sweeping the other's talk away with a wave of his arm. "You are a madman, Derry!" he cried with furious vehemence. "I don't believe you realize what you are thinking of! Belittling your honors, and giving them away! Flinging your birthright from you like an old glove! Is it nothing to be Lord of Aughrun?"

"I do not believe in lords," said Derevaragh, quietly. But Will paid no heed to the answer.

"Is it nothing to have the proudest blood of Inis Fail in your veins?"

"My heart will beat no longer, no warmer for that."

Will waved the arm again furiously. "I could strike you for being an obstinate fool!" he cried. "You are the Lord of Aughrun, and you've got to be the Lord of Aughrun, as many better men than you have been proud to be!"

Derevaragh brought both hands down on the other's shoulders, quite as he had done to Dennis, and he smiled into the flushed, impassioned face. "God bless you, lad," he said affectionately; "it's just the way I am made inside. I am not setting myself up as wiser than any of the rest of us. It's a matter of taste, if you will. Simplicity and equality are my gods, and you must let me worship in my own way, for I promise you," he shook him lightly, and with a laugh, "all missionaries will be cooked and eaten without discrimination as to sect or color!"

Will looked up into his brother's face with a more helpless impatience. "Derry," he pleaded, "think of the beautiful old place and the glorious trees."

"And are they any less beautiful belonging to Will than to Derry?"

"Have you no love for them?" cried the younger, his rage threatening a return.

"Love, yes! But you'll let me see them now and then?" His hands slipped down and he turned to the fire, his face becoming grave. "Ah, lad," he said wearily, "it's not the trees that frighten me away, but the poor souls who need a fire and would steal of me! And it's not the castle and the silly dinners, but the homeless and hungry who would hate me because of them." He was quiet a moment and then turned toward his brother with such a smile as one might give a dearly beloved child. "Would you like to be a lord, Will?" he asked tenderly.

The fresh color in the young man's face deepened. "I should be very proud to be the Earl of Aughrun, yes," he said. "But I am not a Jacob, to take what is my brother's."

"If you would like the play, the bargain's made. And a lucky man I am to have you at my hand. It would have been hard to get rid of, if you had not wanted it!"

"I cannot," said Will, shaking his head.

"Don't you be talking as if I was making you a present, lad. I'd rather die now than that you should not take it. I'm only a steward for you, anyway. What difference whether I hold the title until tomorrow or until the day after?"

"But you will marry some day," persisted Will, endeavoring to let him realize his folly. "And your son might feel differently about his birthright."

"Rest your kind heart with that," said Derevaragh, somewhat moodily. "Do you think any woman in the world would marry me? Women like too many trappings, too many outriders, too many encumbering toys. I could get no woman to live as I do, and I won't live as she does. 'Let me have,' says Omar, 'no more of this world's goods than I can carry on a mule's back.' Let me have no more than I can carry on my own back—there's the only difference."

"It's not so different, for you are a mule if there ever was one!" said Will, between laughter and seriousness. "Think what the family will say!"

"I shall have to bear that affliction but once, whereas if I were to be Lord of Aughrun, I'd be listening to them all the time. Upon my days, Will, when I think what your life will be, I am inclined to think it is too cruel a curse to laden you with, and I'd much rather load it down on Cousin Cormac, whom I never could endure."

Will laughed, and his hand came forward with a boyish awkwardness and embarrassment. "I'll try to bear it, Derry," he said, "and I thank you for the gift of it."

"You're not the thanking party," said Michael, taking the hand and clapping his other upon it. "It is as if I were giving you a cuckoo-clock that distressed me."

"You'll take the money, anyway?"

Derevaragh laughed. "There's not so much of that, I'm thinking," he said, "but that the thieves who will assail you can get it away from you without my help."

"There is but four or five thousand pounds a year," said Will, "but do take it, Derry. Think of the power of good you could do with it!" he added artfully.

"'Tis not money I need in my work," said Derevaragh slowly. "Why should I take the enemy into our camp? I'm not an organizer of short-sighted charities. What is needed in the world is understanding, and, better than understanding, honesty of heart, and, better than honesty—love."

Will, in whose buoyant, simple nature there was none of his brother's earnest spirit, drew away a bit, and looked down at the fire, wondering at the guiding power of the elder's life. It flashed across him in two instants, the amazement and delight in store for his little wife, and the incredulous disparagement of the willing sacrifice in the mouths of the cynical world.

"It depresses you already!" cried Derevaragh. "Or was it I and my dreams and visions? Come, lad, another glass between us to seal the compact."

He was in the act of filling the glasses with the still, deep wine, when the outer door opened and closed, and a hand knocked at the room door with the familiarity of habitude.

"Come in," called Derevaragh, looking up.

The door opened, and Father Ferbane stood before them, shaking the raindrops from his frock. "Good evening, Derevaragh. This is sad news I hear," he said. His ruddy, good-humored face was as grave as a round, red face can be.

Derevaragh went forward to welcome him. "Dennis has been out sooner than I supposed," he said. "This is my brother, William—Father Ferbane. You are just in time for a glass of wine, and to settle my mind on a perplexing question."

"Give me the question first," laughed the priest, going to the chimney-place instinctively.

"I will," said he, filling the glasses as he spoke. "What, now, is your idea of heaven?"

The plain silver cross upon Ferbane's black gown shone flatly in the light of the candles, as he faced them. "I take heaven to be a place where there is no wickedness and no misfortune," he said with quiet directness.

"A fair satisfactory spot then, in the main?"

The priest laughed gently. "If you prefer it so, a very satisfactory spot, I should say."

Derevaragh came to him with a brimming glass outstretched. "Do you think, now, it's at all likely my old uncle has gone to heaven, father?" he pursued. "He was no saint, I fear me."

"Heaven," said Father Ferbane, touching his cross simply, "is ruled by the spirit that forgave sinners."

"You think, then, the late Aughrun is in heaven this night?" insisted Michael.

"I do, indeed," replied the priest, most kindly.

"Then on my days," cried Derevaragh, putting down his own glass without so much as getting it to his lips, and looking indignantly at his latest visitor, "do you call it a decent, neighborly act to talk of sad news when such a piece of good luck comes to my Uncle Cormac?"

Ferbane smiled indulgently. "I meant sad for you. You'll be missing him, will you not?"

"I always felt he was in the wrong family, and from the day his only child turned out to be a girl he hated me. I dare say I shall miss him sorely."

"Don't quarrel with Ferbane because he's trying to take it for granted you're a decent man," said Will.

They drank together in silence, smiling. Then, "Will this not make a difference in your journey to the States?" inquired the priest, sitting down near the table.

"It will delay me," replied Derevaragh. "I must stay long enough after Uncle Cormac is laid to rest to see the title lifted from my shoulders and harnessed upon poor Will yonder. What a grand thing it is to have a younger brother to bear all one's burdens, eh?"

Ferbane stared at him. "You are not giving up the title, man?" he cried.

Derevaragh fell into his chair. "Another one of you!" he cried. "Another! And to think I've been calling you my friend for four years, and have spent many an evening giving you an insight into my belief and creed, and have considered you a man of some intelligence these long times past, only to hear from your own lips that you think my heart a money-bag just waiting to be filled!"

"Do you think it's right to shift your responsibilities, Derevaragh?"

Michael snorted. "Did you ever have an uncle, father?"

"Aye, two of them. They were sailors like my father, as I told you."

"How comes it it is none of your duty to be a sailor then, yourself?"

His two companions laughed at this, and Michael's brow cleared of its frown.

"You'll be gone long in the States?" inquired Ferbane at last.

"I cannot tell," said Derevaragh. "Things may develop which will keep me. I have much work to do over there, and I must find time enough to see Tantallion."

Will's face kindled. "That will be rare!" he said. "I'd like to see the meeting between you two!"

"He will have forgotten me, I warrant," said the other, a little sadness in his voice. "We have both grown men since our last look at each other."

"But you were better than brothers, then!" insisted Will.

Derevaragh flung him a look. "Whisht, lad, there's nothing better than a brother," he said.

Will returned the look and struck the speaker a fraternal blow on the shoulder. "I dare say you have not remarked it," he said, "but I'm drooping with dreamtime. Am I to sleep in your penitent's cell upstairs?"

"Would you come oftener?" sighed Michael, selfishly. "Dennis can't object tonight to my sleeping in my tree bed."

"In the rain?" cried Will.

"Did you ever sleep on the swinging branch of a tree under a tarpaulin in the rain?"

"Never!"

"Then why pretend a knowledge of it? Dennis!" he cried.

"Coming, my lord," was the quavering answer, shut away from him by the kitchen door.

"I must break it to him at once," said Derevaragh smiling. He took up a candle and trimmed it, as the old man entered. Then, holding it toward him, he said, quietly, "My lord will sleep in my bedroom, tonight, Dennis. Light my lord to bed."

Dennis took the candle slowly, his face drawn into a thousand wrinkles of distress. Then his eyes traveled slowly to Will's happy face. "Has he given you the name, Mr. Will?" he said, his voice trembling with disappointment.

Will nodded.

"And the castle and the fortune?"

"The castle, yes. But as to the fortune—!" Will turned impulsively to the priest. "Father, can you not reason with him? There's five thousand pounds a year—he ought to keep it—"

Derevaragh pushed him, laughing, toward the door. "Are you asking the father to do for you what he can't do for himself?" he cried lightly. "Reason with me, indeed! Shame on you, Will, for speaking of a man's infirmities."

Will's ready laugh rang out as he crossed the threshold. "Good night to you," he said. "Have me called early, Derry—we must get back to Aughrun."

Dennis followed him out, with one reproachful backward glance at his master, his old head shaking sadly with disapproval. "An Aughrun, if there ever was one," he muttered, sorrowfully.

Derevaragh turned back to his friend Ferbane, whose good-humored face was smiling above the catholic line of his collar. "What a curious fancy it is—this desire to possess things!" he said.

"You are a blessed lunatic, Dere-

varagh," said Ferbane, affectionately. "Shall I be seeing you again, if you start for Aughrun in the morning?"

Derevaragh sat him down, and bent a meditative eye upon Ferbane. "'Tis a good suggestion," he said. "I'll not come back, but go straight to Dublin, settle the matter of my abdication, and go from there to the States."

"Because of Dennis?" inquired the priest.

Derevaragh nodded.

"And what is it you're going to do in the States?"

"Tell them what a practical success can be made of coöperative labor. I love your American," he said roundly. "What he wants is success, money—let him have it. It's good for him. I have great hopes of your American—he has less to wipe away than the older civilizations."

"I shall be missing you while you're gone," said Ferbane, after a silence. "There'll be no one to quarrel with."

"And am I the only one in this parish that dares dispute with the priest of God? Ah, Ferbane, how can you keep honest with such authority in your hands?"

"Try it and see."

Derevaragh leaned toward the fire, and poked its rueful embers idly. "Ah, no—I would rather be a priest of men."

"There do be a difference?"

"There is. And there should be none."

Father Ferbane leaned his arm on the table comfortably. "Where is the difference, my son?" he asked, untroubled. The little silver cross he wore swung in the candle light in smooth brilliance. It attracted Derevaragh's eye as he turned to answer, and seemed to help him in his reply. "You teach men that one man carried his burden to Golgotha that they might be 'saved.' I would teach them that every man must 'save,' must carry the burden."

"Did I not know you so well, Derevaragh," replied the priest, "I should be wasting my breath telling you that

we believe all that and then a little more."

"And had I not sworn it at you so many times," replied the other, who was now walking to the window to stare out at the wall of darkness, "I should be protesting to you that 'tis not for what we believe but for what we produce that the world goes round." He turned from the blind window and came back. At his friend's side he paused and lifted the little silver cross. "'Tis not by teaching men to finger beads that we shall ever establish the kingdom of heaven. 'Tis by inspiring them to bear upon their shoulders the burdens of weaker men."

He dropped the symbol reverently, and went back to his place at the chimney.

III

It was a month later when Michael Derevaragh set out for the States, his business in Dublin having been, as his lawyer mildly expressed it, of a fairly unusual nature, and one which, owing to a certain lack of precedent, could not be dispatched hurriedly. The Crown itself, when expressing itself as satisfied that the title and tenure should pass to the younger brother, had intimated that there was a refreshing novelty about the affair and a gracious willingness to receive the eccentric Irishman when next his important affairs took him to London.

But the delay was not in any sense irksome to Will, who had sent for his "pretty wife and his two pretty children," and whose enjoyment of the whole situation would have been unmarred had he been able, or had Kitty been able, by any force of argument or bullyragging, to induce Derevaragh to sleep at the hotel where they lodged, instead of tramping off every afternoon across the historic plain of Clontarf in the direction of Howth's Head to rest in the open air under the protection of its great cromlech. Mistress Kitty, who had felt at first the

same reluctance as had Will to accept so large a gift from Michael, became convinced, as she watched his movements during their stay in Dublin, that the title was being transferred to hands much better qualified to cherish it with dignity. And so the last of her generous scruples vanished, and she flung herself headlong into the delights of coroneted monograms and such-like insignia of her new rank.

And perhaps the tassel on the cap of the climax was put to the affair when, on their last day in town together, Michael took Will by the arm and walked him down to a pier where lay a brigantine, loading busily, and remarked, "Pretty, isn't she? Faith, lad, I wish you were off with me!"

Will turned on him, jaw drooping. "You can't go over in a sailing vessel, Michael!" he cried—despair and apprehension in his face.

"You think to get me into a floating hotel, when you couldn't get me into one on land?" inquired Derevaragh with a peaceful smile. "We sail in an hour, with the tide."

"Your luggage?" gasped Will.

Derevaragh gently slapped the leather case he wore suspended by a strap about his shoulder. "My sea-jacket is on board," he said. And when the goodly ship, with its load of wool and its one passenger was drawn away from the dock, Will Derevaragh still stood there staring after her as if he would never quite recover from this latest blow.

So that, with the long sailing, and his many engrossing affairs that awaited him on his arrival in New York, it was well toward the end of August when he set his face toward Newport, where he had located his friend Tantallion, and arrived there late one evening, like a pilgrim in an alien land, weary and dusty, but content in the physical fatigue that made the prospect of a chair and a glass so poignantly delightful. He had walked a long way, as was always his pleasure to do, and he was still pushing his way onward as the shadows began to show palpably dark along the roadway. The road-

way had run between flat, square little fields, each with its individual tinge of green and brown and red, each primly walled in stone, with now and then a house, of unpicturesque frugality for the most part, tightly shut as if the very air came into the category of unwelcome visitors, and no human creature had passed him on foot. Now and then a dismal, sordid train buzzed noisily along its wire, clanging a goaded bell, or occasionally a basket cart went teetering by, bearing its load of incipient society women and a groom evidently much at a loss how to dispose of his more mature length of limb, and quite too frequently, like a bolt from the blue, would shoot past him a motor-car enthusiastically exceeding the speed limit and leaving behind it an inferno of dust and smell.

Of none of these fellow-travelers had he been able to ask directions, but he knew that he was headed in the right direction and that Tantallion's house was near the sea, and he trudged on. The roadway had altered, as he persevered, and now on either side was lined with box-hedge and imposing stone fences, beyond which lay those half-hearted palaces that remain lifeless the greater part of the year. It never occurred to him that his childhood's brother might be living in one of them, but he kept a lookout for some passing denizen of the place who might direct him. And at last, when he had begun to think himself the only human creature on foot in the whole world, he saw a head rise suddenly on the garden side of a hedge near him, and, going as thankfully toward it as ever Crusoe must have welcomed Friday, found the head to belong to a gardener, who, with a basket at his side, was scrupulously gathering every dried leaf from the flower-beds.

"Can you tell me," said Derevaragh almost hurriedly, as if he feared to lose his only chance of information, "where Richard Tantallion lives?"

"Here," was the ungracious reply. The man looked up once, and, subsequently contemptuous, became oblivious to his presence. Derevaragh had

simply echoed "Here!" and remained looking at the place.

It was a stately white-stone house, with a sunken garden at one side, and wide terraces built up about the other. Smooth, green lawns, that might have been laid down with a palette knife, were bordered and damascened with flowers, and, nearer the farther wing of the place, miles of intricate gravel path laced a couple of acres back and forth between low, sharp-cornered hedges.

Derevaragh drew a deep breath. "The finest cage is none too fine for you, Dickie Tantallion," he said to himself, thinking with a sigh how little he could bear the irk of such a place. There popped into his mind the line of the starling: "I can't get out, I can't get out!" He nodded and smiled a little. "That is what I should be saying," he thought.

"Now, then," said the gardener, getting to his feet as the last offending spot had been removed from his too spotless domain, "what are you loitering there for?"

Derevaragh turned toward him, smiling. The man was sharp-featured, but dull-witted, and Michael, knowing he would appreciate the situation alone, enjoyed it for both. "Thanking you for your most sensible suggestion," he replied, his rich, smooth Irish voice producing an almost hypnotic effect upon the man, "I'll be going on." With that he nodded genially, and to the gardener's amazement stepped in at the fancifully cut boxwood entrance, passed him, and went serenely toward the house itself.

The servant, who answered his inaudible summons at the great glass and iron door, was no less inclined to look upon him with suspicion. "Whom do you wish to see?" he inquired, blocking the entrance with an inadvertent completeness resultant from long practice.

"Mr. Richard Tantallion," said Derevaragh, easefully. "Is he at home?"

"I think not," was the reply. The man had swiftly and skillfully taken in every dusty detail of his simple

garb, and, never having seen such boots yet admitted to the immaculate splendor of the reception hall, was about to retire and close the door when Derevaragh's voice held him as surely as a detaining hand. "I'll trouble you to find out," he said, still quietly but as one having authority, "and I'll step inside while I'm waiting."

The footman stood aside reluctantly. "Will you send in a card?"

"I will not," said Michael Derevaragh, "for I never possessed such a thing. Nor will I be sending in my name, for I have a childish desire to surprise him." He sat him down gratefully upon a long dark chest. "I'll wait here," he said, his attention now distracted to the box on which he sat.

The servant still looked doubtful. "My orders are—" he began, when Derevaragh silenced him by wagging his hand to and fro impatiently.

"You'll be making no mistake if you do as I say," he said. "I'm no stranger to Mr. Tantallion, as I'll prove to you. I was with him when his father bought this chest." He slapped it as he sat on it as if it were a favorite horse. "Tis lined with cedar," said Derevaragh, going over every detail with as much satisfaction as if he were a collector instead of a shirker of rare possessions, "with copper worked into the corners, and a wide border of carving representing the court of Maca. And on the inside of the lid there is carved a wreath of oak, colored green and red so that it seems you might pick the leaves away as from a tree, and in the centre of it is a golden harp set with three green beryls like a shamrock. Is it not so?"

The servant nodded blankly.

"Then," Derevaragh concluded, "having proved to you that whether I am an old friend, a furniture dealer, a cast-off servant, or a burglar, I am at least not a stranger to your master's house; be good enough to let him know that I am here."

The man never spoke again, but turned and departed as he was bidden, passing down the wide hall and through

some hanging glories at a doorway.

Derevaragh sat waiting, passing his hands back and forth upon the polished surface of the coffer, smiling and resting. The hall was filled with wonderful things, like an enchanted palace, and as his eyes wandered over them, now and then he nodded as to an old friend. Between the open doorways of other rooms, he caught glimpses of further spreading treasures, and, with something like a sigh, he said again: "The finest cage is none too fine for you, Dickie Tantallion!"

Almost as if he had called the name aloud and its possessor had answered it in person, there appeared at the door of the glowing hangings the man he had come to see, the footman almost at his side fearful and yet hopeful of unpleasant consequences.

Tantallion was not a tall man, and his comfortable rotundity of face and body made him seem shorter than he really was. He had a smooth-shaven, healthily-colored face, with good-natured eyes, now rather clouded by uncertainty, and was as bald as any monk.

Derevaragh merely looked at him, watching his approach, smiling ever, and always passing his hands to and fro upon the dark wooden chest. But at last, not in the least embarrassed and yet finding the interval a bit too long, he shook his head with a laugh and said, in what Dennis called his blarney voice, "Dick, if you have forgotten me, I'll lay the broken pieces of my heart upon your threshold and go my way."

Tantallion seemed to expand suddenly. "Derry-down-derry!" he cried, clapping both hands upon his visitor's shoulders, "you dear, damnable soul!" He literally dragged Derevaragh to his feet and shook him as if he would fain have hugged him. "From where under heaven!"

Derevaragh laughed happily. "Dickie, God bless you," he said, slapping the other's arm with a boyish rapture.

The footman retreated softly at this juncture, disappointed in his per-

spicacity, but secure at least in his position.

"And to think," said Tantallion, who was talking at the top of his lungs, "you've grown up, and here I have been thinking of you as a lad of fifteen all the while. Why didn't you write and tell me, Derry?"

"You've grown—around—a bit, yourself."

"And what are you doing over here, you wild Irishman? Come have a drink." As he dragged Derevaragh into the farther room, the latter caught at the portières with a friendly hand. "I remember these," he said.

"Of course you do," cried Tantallion, in the voice of a child on Christmas morning. "Didn't we sit on a pile of prayer rugs making faces at a solemn little heathen, while father was dickering for them? And didn't we go home with them, each of us carrying one, walking behind father and pretending he was a merchant prince of Bagdad carrying presents to the beautiful princess he wanted to marry? Do you remember how surprised the sharks always were when they found him no common-or-garden tourist who didn't know a Bokhara from a camel's-hair shawl? Oh, good God, Derry!—it makes a kid of me just to hear your laugh again!"

He drew him across the dining-room, into a smaller room beyond. "This is my particular hole," he said. "I was here when you came. Sit down there and select your poison. Pretty nice room, eh, what? Had this just to suit me—nobody knows what to call it. The architect had it down on his plans as a 'den.' But I balked at that. 'There's nothing of the wild beast about me, is there?' I asked him. 'Call it the study'—that was his next brilliant move. 'I'm no student,' says I. Well, now, isn't it a very funny thing that the average law-abiding voter hasn't been considered enough to produce a suitable word in the English language applicable to this apartment?"

Derevaragh lay at ease in his chair, smiling, and watching his friend mix-

ing a long cool draught of imprisoned sunshine.

"Look at women—" said Tantallion, under the spur of his own excitement, "boudoirs, and sewing-rooms and music-rooms, and tea-rooms, and morning-rooms and retiring-rooms! So I just told that architect to take a fine pen and print in this space, 'This is the room where Dickie Tantallion receives his friends, rushes drinks, talks business—when he has to—smokes his highly injurious cigarettes, sneaks away to be alone when he wants to, sits with his feet on anything he pleases, consults with his trainer and gambles!'"

"A bit elaborate for every-day use," said Derevaragh, laughing.

Tantallion put a long glass into his hand. "Here's to you, Derry. I wish you came home every day!"

Derevaragh sighed in utter content. "It's good of you to call it coming home, Dickie," he said. "I'm glad you were glad to see me, for if you hadn't been, upon my soul, I think I should have cried in my two hands. Your health, Dick. Stop—are you married?"

Tantallion nodded. "Eight years," he said.

"Her health, then!" said Derevaragh, rising.

"You're not?" asked Dick. The other shook his head. "Her health, then," said he, and they laughed and drank together.

"Tell me about her," said Derevaragh, sitting down again. "I mean, tell me anything I don't already know."

"If you didn't know I was married, what can you know of my wife?" inquired his host, settling himself into another huge chair, glass in hand.

"Well," said Michael, closing his eyes and stretching out long in the chair, "to begin with, she's the luckiest woman ever born out of Ireland. Secondly, and consequently, the happiest. And thirdly—for I remember your ways with every pair of pretty eyes we passed in our travels whether they had a smile or a yashmak down beneath them, and for all you were in short knickers—she's undoubtedly the

prettiest. Have you any children, Dick?"

"No," said Tantallion slowly. "We had a boy—he was a fine little chap, Derry. He used to ride with me, the little beggar—got hurt at it one day and—"

"Ah, Dick, I'm that sorry!" Derevaragh's voice had a tone in it that went straight to the sad spot.

Tantallion put the topic away quickly. "Do you still ride, Derry?"

"Yes, now and then, though I don't own an animal in the world."

"Ah, well," Tantallion consoled him, "you'll have plenty of those when the old uncle dies, eh, what?"

"He's dead already," answered Derevaragh. "Peace to his soul. Did you not see it in the news?"

"No!" cried Tantallion blithely. "Well, good enough."

"You have a sweet candor about you, Dickie."

"I mean—of course——"

Derevaragh broke in sharply. "You mean of course you are glad. Don't pretend there was anything else."

Tantallion laughed. "You haven't altered by the parting of a hair!" he said. "So now you are Earl of Aughrun, are you—and Viscount, what was it?—Abbeylaix? And Baron something. I remember asking my father about all those titles when we were youngsters, and learning them by heart and envying you with all my soul."

"You're after wasting a breakage of the tenth commandment on the wrong person, then," smiled Derevaragh, "for it's my brother Will I persuaded to undertake the burden. You remember little Will—don't you—who stood on the ground and cried when we climbed trees? Fair cut out to be a grand lord, he is."

Tantallion leaned toward him—incredulity written along every line of his face. "Do you mean to tell me," he said very slowly, "that you turned the titles and estate over to Will?"

"I do mean it, certainly," returned the other. "And glad I was to be rid of it, too. And Will and Kitty were glad to take it. And there you are!"

Tantallion threw himself back in his chair with a jerk. "Well, Derry," he said, almost angrily, "you are a fool!"

Derevaragh grinned at him.

"I wish I'd been there to talk to you," spluttered Dick. "I'd have made you see what a silly ass you were. I'd have appealed to your brother's better nature not to take it away from you."

"Tush! 'Twas cramming it down his throat I was," said Derevaragh. "I didn't want the thing, anymore than a Mohammedan would want a rosary. Will came to my rescue like the good fellow he is. He's but a child, and enjoys playing at fairy tales. Don't be fashed with me, Dick," he added soberly, but in his most blarneying tones. "Talk to me now about your own affairs. 'Tis about you I came to find out. What are you doing? Do you think now it's likely I will see your wife?"

"You mean this evening?" asked Tantallion, his face still clouded with indignation at Derry's folly. He pulled out his watch and fairly swung it back into his pocket, his impatience tingeing every act with irritable sharpness. "It's now nearly seven. She is going out to dinner with her cousin. They'll probably be down presently."

"Are you going too?" asked Michael.

Tantallion made a vigorous motion of denial. "Heavens, no. I said I wouldn't go. I lied out of it—important business engagement with an out-of-town man. Well—here you are!"

Derevaragh rose and put his glass on the table. "Are you sure you are not staying home on my account Dick?" he asked. "Because you know, I can just as well be going along now as later."

"Going along?" echoed Tantallion. "Going along? If you think you are not going to stay with me a year or so, you're very much mistaken."

Derevaragh's hand fell with a friendly acknowledgment of this cordiality upon Tantallion's shoulder. "I can't stay," he said.

"Why not?"

"I must get back to Boston—I'm to speak there tomorrow."

Tantallion looked at him a moment in surprise. "Nonsense," he said, taking a last definite gulp of his highball; "if that's all, you can run up and back when tomorrow comes." He rose. "Where's your luggage?" he inquired authoritatively.

Derevaragh smiled at that. Going to the table where he had laid his hat and leather case, he took them up and held them out toward Dick. "There," he said in much amusement.

"That!"

"Just that," confirmed Michael. "The hat, you see, like any prestidigitateur's, contains nothing. There the resemblance ends; for it always remains in the same condition, except when I put my head into it, and even then"—he laughed a little—"according to my friend Richard Tantallion, there's not so much in it! The box contains a change or so, brushes and that kind of thing, Epictetus, Shakespeare, Mazzini, Omar, the Bible, Aurelius, Spinoza, Nietzsche, and a few other folks who make my daily bread. There you have my luggage, Dickie. Did you want it?"

"And do you mean to say," Tantallion said for the second time, in a second access of incredulous horror, "that you came from the other side with only this?" He tapped the leather case at every word.

Derevaragh sighed lugubriously. "Are you so shocked, dear Dick? 'Tis all I have on this side or the other, except a few more books, and an old servant who talks to me just the way you do. You see, I'm no one to visit in a grand house, but I'll be dropping in on you like this every now and then when you're alone."

Tantallion looked at him in a despair too deep for tears. "You have grown up to be the same impossible thing you gave promise of," he said dejectedly. "I don't know what to do with you."

"I had no notion of staying, Dick."

"But you must stay—I want you to stay. Where do you want to go at this time of night?"

"Oh, anywhere," said Derevaragh. "I almost always sleep out of doors."

"You sleep out of—" began the other, and there his voice failed him.

"When Dennis lets me," amended Michael. "But you see I've left Dennis behind, and can do it every night now!"

Tantallion stood staring at him a moment longer; then drew an ultimate breath. "I'll get Alice," he said, with the boyish dependence upon his wife that every happily married man betrays on occasions of domestic perplexity. Before Derevaragh could point out to him that even Alice could not produce evening garb and fashionable gewgaws from either the leather case or the empty hat, Tantallion had turned and left the room.

Derevaragh sat down again laughing, and waited with his chin upon his interclasping fingers. The first instinct of man seemed to be, in his finding, the accumulating of possessions, and the second to regard as an irresponsible idiot that person who preferred to exist without any of these self-made necessities!

There was a sound in the dining-room adjoining, and a woman's voice called softly, "Dick, oh, Dick!" Before Derevaragh could so much as get to his feet, the woman appeared in the doorway.

Being a man unaccustomed to such visual exercise, he could not be expected to notice every detail of her being in that first moment of her appearance, but when afterward he put together his mental notes of her, which he gathered slowly during his talk with her, he made her out to be a woman almost as tall as he, a woman about thirty years of age, with a radiant fairness laid upon her as alluring as Astarte's veil, the most really golden hair he had ever seen except among the still recurring De Danaans of his own home, which seemed to shed a sparkle in the air about it. Undoubtedly it was the hair that he first noted, as everybody did, but he almost forgot it the next instant in the wonder of her eyes. He was quite at a loss to analyze the reason for their effect of compelling startling directness, though afterward

he came to attribute it to the extraordinary black outer edge of the gray iris, which with her dark lashes gave almost the effect of an artist's trick of pencil. She was, he could have told in this after musing, most beautiful of body, her bare bosom, and her arms as they appeared and disappeared in the hanging lace sleeves of her gown, showing rare whitenesses. She carried herself with the naturally unconscious poise of an indisputably beautiful woman, who need never give her beauty a considering thought. She stood in the doorway, a cloak, almost as miraculous as her gown, hanging over her arm.

"I beg your pardon," she was saying as Derevaragh realized when the first shock of her enchantment passed away. "I thought Mr. Tantallion was here."

Derevaragh came forward to a corner of the table.

"He was here but a moment ago," he said, his voice almost hushed by the look of her, "and I think he went to find you. I'll have to be introducing myself, as it is. Michael Derevaragh is my name, and I was David to Dickie's Jonathan when we were boys. He has been telling me about you—for I haven't seen him in seventeen years. But I'll have a bone to pick with him, for he did by no means prepare me sufficiently, and has made me cut an awkward figure, standing abashed before you when you came in."

She came slowly nearer, her eyes upon him. "You have mistaken me for Mrs. Tantallion, haven't you?" she asked. "I can't flatter myself that Dickie would have talked about me when you had heard nothing about Alice. I am only Alice's cousin, Mrs. Chessel." She dropped her cloak over the back of the chair Tantallion had been sitting in. "You are an old friend of Dick's, then," she said, with a conventional inflection calculated to produce conversation.

"I am that," replied Derevaragh, looking down at her as she sat on the arm of the huge chair, drawing on her gloves. He was hardly thinking of what he was saying for wondering why

she wished to cover her beautiful hands. "He was born in the same village that I was, in Ireland, though I am a native to the soil, as you may have remarked, and he is not. But his father and mother were over there several years. Mr. Tantallion was studying the cromlechs."

"I don't know what a cromlech is," she said.

"No more does anyone!" he laughed. "Mr. Tantallion spent a good many years trying to find out, and gave up, I imagine, in despair. Then Mrs. Tantallion died, you know, and he made ready to leave Ireland forever, and go on with his researches in other lands. But that was where Dickie put down his small feet and lifted up his large voice, and declared he never, never would go away from Derry."

"Derry?" queried the woman, lifting her eyes.

Michael almost caught his breath. It was quite as if she had called him by the silly familiar little name. "Myself," he said, with a slight bow forward from the edge of the table against which he leaned. "I have all my life escaped, by some kindly interposition of Fate, the name of Mike. Dick and my brother have always called me Derry."

She pulled the glove slowly up around her long arm. "Tell me some more," she said. "I like your brogue."

Derevaragh laughed. "I like your impudence," he matched her. "But there is nothing more except that his father borrowed me of my mother, and took me away with Dick. And we were together until we were fifteen. And never after that did I lay eyes on him until today."

"What fun you and he will have now talking over those years you spent together! And how I wish I could stay and listen. But I am going instead to a stupid dinner at the very stupidest home in Newport."

There was a silence while Derevaragh watched the weary frown of boredom between her brows. "Why do you go then?" he asked at last.

"Oh, I have to," she sighed, in great self-commiseration. She rose as if re-

minded of the need for doing so, and lifted her cloak up to her shoulders from behind her as it lay upon the chair. It made her look a fabled creature, half woman, half butterfly, as she drew it forward like two great wings at either side.

"I am very sorry for you," said Derevaragh. It was what anybody would have said under like circumstances.

"I knew you would sympathize with me," she said, looking for the fastenings of her cloak.

Derevaragh shook his head. "I must correct you there," he said gently; "I don't sympathize with you in the least. I said I was sorry for you, Mrs. Chessel—sorry you would permit yourself to be so enslaved."

There was a long silence then. She looked at him steadily, but the way of her looking changed from cold resentment of his daring to a vexed irritation at his belittling of her obligations, and from that to a faint liking for his honesty, and from that to an almost smiling appreciation of the possibilities of a new amusement.

She let the cloak slip again from her shoulders to the very floor. "I'm not a slave," she said, and indeed she did not look one. "I won't go."

He shook his head at her again, but this time as one might to advise a silly child of its unbalanced arrogance. He stepped toward her, and, lifting the cloak, laid it again upon her—the visible yoke of her thralldom.

"You cannot emancipate yourself simply by causing your hostess an evening of annoyance," he said quietly.

She drew away from him angrily, and turned upon him, her eyes glittering like prismatic ice with her sense of outraged dignity. He stepped back and stood waiting for the rebuke that promised itself in her twitching red lips. He knew as well as she that what stirred her anger most against him was that the undignified behavior had been her own.

But at that moment Tantallion returned, bringing with him his wife, and as they entered they forever

spared Derevaragh the speaking of her rage.

"What—you here—making friends already?" he cried as his eyes fell upon her. She had become her usual well-poised, impassive self in an instant, obliterating the traces of her recent anger with a smile.

"I came in thinking you were here. I am always bored in the invariable interval between the completion of my dressing and Alice's. Are you really ready, Alice?"

"I want first to welcome Mr. Derry—no? Oh, Mr. Derevaragh," said Mrs. Tantallion, coming forward with a sweet graciousness. "Dick wants me to make you understand, as I am the only person who really appreciates his nervous and sensitive spirit, how very dangerous might be the consequences of your thwarting him in his desire to keep you with us."

Derevaragh took her hand—it was quite tanned and muscular—and smiled down at her. She was a little, round, pretty creature, her hair looking quite colorless about her sun-browned face, her eyes, no deeper than any jewels on her fingers, just as bright as they. She was at her best in white linen, bare-armed and bare-headed on the golf course, but she was charming in her more elaborate dress, in spite of the fact that her throat was too brown not to show an odd demarcation from her plump, cream-colored shoulders. She had the unformed impulsiveness of a healthy child.

"Has he told you how impossible a man I am?" asked Derevaragh.

"He has almost wept," she answered. "He says you won't sleep in a bed, and that you have no clothes. But that doesn't matter to us at all. You can sleep in the sunken garden by the moon-dial, if you are not afraid it will affect your brain—the moon, I mean, of course. Do stay. You can come and go just as you please. Talk it over some more with Dick, and if you want my advice, do as he says. I always have to, in the end! Come, Desda—we shall be late. Take us to the carriage, Dick. Good-bye, Mr. Derry—we

shall hope to find you here when we return."

Mrs. Chessel gave him but a cool nod as she followed her cousin to the door, but at the threshold she stopped. Slowly she turned back and met his eyes squarely.

He was standing with both hands on the back of a light chair, his head rather bent forward, and his eyes all the more noticeably fixed upon her because of his position. A moment passed as they so regarded each other, neither moving.

And then she smiled at him suddenly, without warning, a smile of such lingering merry sweetness that it seemed to him he had never seen a smile before. She turned, with faint indications of it still at the corners of her mouth, and went away, and the radiance of her look so transfixed him that he was still standing there motionless when Dick returned alone.

"Dinner will be served in a few moments—I'll go upstairs with you myself," he said, "if you want to rid yourself of the stains of travel."

Derevaragh pulled himself together. "I do indeed," he said. As they crossed the dining-room where a manservant was preparing noiselessly the elaborate accessories of their jug of wine and loaf of bread, the question in Derevaragh's mind became the question on Derevaragh's lips.

"Tell me about Mrs. Chessel, won't you?"

"By George, you're hit, like everybody else!" laughed his host, pulling an arm through his. "She is a beauty, though, isn't she? Mrs. Chessel, my dear man, is probably the richest woman in this colony of millionaires. You—even you—must have heard of Peter Chessel—the Napoleon of commercial wars?"

"Peter Chessel's wife?" cried Derevaragh, almost coming to a stand. A servant passed them going towards the house door.

"He certainly was her husband," reaffirmed Tantallion. "Wonderful, isn't it?"

"Was!" echoed Derevaragh.

"Why, didn't you hear of his death?" Derevaragh shook his head. "Was he hanged?"

"Hanged!" shouted Tantallion. "What the devil do you mean?"

Derevaragh suddenly grinned and started on. "It was always a notion of mine that he should have been," he said, quaintly. But his host groaned without a flicker of amusement in his eye. "Derry, don't tell me—you are not—one of those crazy—" he gasped slowly.

"I am worse than crazy, Dick," laughed Derevaragh.

"What is worse?" inquired the other, hopelessly.

"To be sane," said Derevaragh.

And suddenly the whole topic vanished from his mind as if it had been written on a slate and in a twinkling rubbed away. For before his eyes, at the open doorway, with an eloquent background of luggage, and dressed in the most correct and impressive valet's tweed, stood Dennis—Dennis—Dennis!

Derevaragh stood still. Tantallion stood still. The very world under Derevaragh's feet seemed to him to be standing still.

But Dennis calmly bowed—albeit the old eyes of him were bright with his gladness at being with his beloved master again, and the old hands of him trembled very much as he held his hat in both of them.

"Perhaps I am not sane, either!" said Derevaragh, pinching his own arm. "Dickie, do you see a man by the name of Dennis by the door?"

Dennis bowed again. "Mr. Will sent me over after you, Mr. Michael." The other servant had retreated, leaving the three of them alone.

Derevaragh pointed to the luggage. "What is that?" he demanded.

Dennis coughed and turned his hat around. "Mr. Will said, sir, he ordered them for you in Dublin from the tailor who made you your steamer coat, sir, and he hoped you would remember that you should dress as befits the brother of an earl."

At that Derevaragh turned a look

at his host, and a look at his valet, and then flung up his head and laughed. Tantallion laughed with him, and Dennis stood by smiling, much relieved. "Did he say that? The brother of an earl—the rogue!" His eyes came back to the wrinkled old visage of his faithful servant. "I'm glad to see you, Dennis," he said kindly, "and I dare say you were worried lest I couldn't get on without you. But I must say—" he looked again at the luggage disapprovingly.

"Nine books and a shirt is no luggage for any man," said Dennis, sententiously.

V

DEREVARAGH's business in Boston took him away early the next morning—still drowsy, for he and his host had sat up the greater part of the night talking over the years when they had trudged hand in hand over the better part of those countries that "view their introverted mountains" in the "unshapen sapphire" of the Mediterranean, in the wake of the dear, kind Man-Who-Knew-Everything. And as these years were five in number, and each day of them had been crammed with incidents no boy could forget—such as being admitted into places where no white people had ever been before, at the imminent risk of going at a moment's notice to that bourne whence no people, white or otherwise, ever returned—there had been much to talk about; and much left as yet unspoken of.

The business in Boston—which consisted in speaking before a small but spellbound audience of socialists, an interview with a manager who hoped vainly to exploit him as an attraction, an inspection of a faulty but sincere beginning of an enterprise along similar lines to those he encouraged, a dreadful dinner with the editor of a dusty magazine, who, by some unaccountable accident, had become president of the society whose guest he was to be later in the evening, followed by

his brilliant address—the light of which is still to be seen shining in the eyes of some who heard him—served to prevent his return to Tantallion's house that night, as he had planned to do before the arrangement had been made for his "double bill."

He found it possible, however, to get away early the following day, and he again presented himself at Tantallion's door, at a little after the luncheon hour.

It amused him not a little to note the difference in his reception between this and the previous occasion. Cordiality is a cold, disaffected word to use to express the manner of the once doubtful footman. Derevaragh looked the man over with a smile of genuine amusement as the servant relieved him of his hat and leather case.

"So—Epitome of Civilization," he said kindly, "Dennis has told you that I might have been an earl, hasn't he?"

The man stammered and blushed with embarrassment, as Derevaragh went serenely on his way to the room where, he had not forgotten, Dickie Tantallion had been directed, on the plans of his house, to receive his friends. He found him, accoutred in strange garb, a leather cap and a pair of goggles on his knees, taking a hasty after-luncheon smoke. He jumped up as Derevaragh came in.

"Hello, conqueror. I am glad to see you back. You might have told me what a celebrity I had the honor of sheltering!"

"You might have asked your own footman. But then I did tell you that I am not the celebrity—it is Will."

Tantallion sniffed as he reached for the morning paper lying near him. "You may be able to get out of a great many scrapes by shunting your responsibilities off on to Will's shoulders, but you can't evade the Nemesis of the Press. Here you are—'The Lost Love of Labor'—a column and a half about you and your speech last night."

"May I ask," said Derevaragh, who

was looking at him curiously, "if you have gone in for deep-sea diving?"

"What—the clothes? We are going for a drive in my car—you are just in time. Aren't you interested in your famousness?"

"Vastly—but I made the speech, and I have no desire to read it again, and see again all the places where I might have said clever things and didn't."

"Well, I have read it," said Tantallion. "It sounds really sensible, you know. I was surprised. I thought all this talk about socialism or whatever it is was 'hot air,' but I'll be hanged if you don't make co-operation appeal even to a business man. This account says you are the author of several books—I didn't know that. 'The Augean Stable,' for example. Why have I never seen it?"

"I'm ashamed to confess to you that I am after bringing you a copy with me."

He laid his hand upon a volume protruding from his pocket and placed it on the table. "Only, mind, Dickie," he said, "you're not to read it!"

The cordial footman appeared at the door, just as Tantallion's hand reached for the book, in scornful disregard of his friend's admonition, and announced that the ladies were ready to start. Derevaragh sighed with relief at the interruption of Tantallion's admiring thanks. The enthusiastic motorist was awake in Dick, instantly, to the exclusion of all other interests. He put the book back upon the table. "Very well. Get Mr. Derevaragh a cap and coat. I'll fish you out some goggles, Derry."

Derevaragh submitted silently to the assumption of the disguise. When both the men could have been mistaken for any other two men in the place, they went out, to find Mrs. Tantallion and Mrs. Chessel already ensconced in the immense car, looking like votaries of some strange sisterhood that had vowed never to look upon the world save through the window that was set impersonally in the middle of the silk bags they wore upon their

heads. Derevaragh laughed as he greeted them. "Could one give nature a more absolute divorce?" he said. "Look at us and look at the machine—I wonder it doesn't amaze even the Almighty to see what extraordinary things we evolve from the simple Arcadia he set in motion!"

Mrs. Chessel was disposed to be kind to him. "Are you fond of motoring?" she inquired. It always disappointed him when she made use of these wholesale conventional beginnings. Always! Good gracious, he was thinking about her as if he had known her for years.

"I have never been in one of these things before," he said.

Mrs. Tantallion faintly cried out. "You will be frightened to death," she said. "Dick drives unmercifully fast. Even I never get used to his speed."

"I'll lead up to it gradually," laughed Tantallion, as he took his place. The car stumbled forward, and set off down the curving pathway to the highroad. Even at the easy pace Tantallion had promised them it seemed to Derevaragh more like coasting down an ice-covered hill than anything he had ever before experienced. They went gradually faster until they reached the outskirts of the more crowded roads, and then, as an empty stretch led before them, Tantallion did something with his hands and feet that seemed to push them into eternal space on an electric current. The car raced on madly, splitting the wind, up and down the gentle hills like an avenging thunderbolt from the hand of Jove. Then as they approached a small settlement of houses where a number of young children were playing in and about the road, Tantallion slowed down skilfully, and the horn gave its hoarse warning, with immediate effect. When that danger was passed, and before the insatiate man had time again to hurl them into a new accession of speed, Derevaragh put his hand upon his arm.

"What's the matter with the thing?" he inquired.

Tantallion automatically slowed down to a snail's pace instantly.

"Matter? Where?" he asked anxiously.

"Why does it shake like a corn-popper? And make a noise like a hideous tom-tom?"

Tantallion roared with laughter. "Why, there's nothing the matter with it," he said. "You can't get that speed without some vibration and racket."

"Would you mind stopping a moment?"

Pressure being brought to bear on a few persuadable spots, the machine stood still in the road.

"What's wrong?" asked Alice Tantallion.

Derevaragh got out of the car laughing. "Well, of all the amusements!" he cried, pulling off his goggles, as he turned in the road to face them. His eyes were abrim with laughter. "Of all the infernal discomfort! Why, man, if you were to ride in a tram that made half so much noise and shook you to pieces half so furiously, you would feel imposed upon, and you would be after writing the matter up as intolerable!"

"You don't know anything about it," growled Tantallion, half angrily. "It's an exceptionally steady car. Of course, to get that speed, as I told you, you can't help but increase the vibration."

"But what, in the name of Heaven, do you want that speed for? Look here, along the road—did you ever see such glorious goldenrod? And the blue chickory down between? And there's a cardinal flower I swear I should have missed entirely. Why, Dick, it was nothing but a dirty yellow smudge a moment ago—the bank on either side."

"Well, really," said Mrs. Tantallion, "you are hard to please."

"And why should it please me, dear lady, to have your face hidden and my back turned to you and no chance of our exchanging anything more articulate than the shout of mariners in a storm?"

"Well, what are you going to do about it?" demanded Tantallion, moodily.

Derevaragh was already taking off the overcoat he had assumed at Tantallion's direction. "I'm going to leave these with you—and a perfect substitute they should be making too, as they are all of me that you could see or hear! And I'll ask you to forgive me for being unable to enjoy your pleasure, and for permission to find my way home on foot, along here by the golden rod, and the Queen Anne's lace."

Tantallion laughed suddenly.

"Derry, you are a first-class idiot." He stowed the coat, as he took it from his guest, under the seat. "You dignify even the beastly old wild carrot, that ruins our farms down here, with poetic names."

"God made us of dust, and God knows we have come near to ruining the world, yet I prefer to be called a man," returned Derevaragh, and as they started away slowly they saw him pick one of the great round lace-like blossoms of the despised weed, and hold it close to his face as he studied with infinite delight the many little stars that made up its constellated surface.

The car stopped before it had left him many yards behind. "Hello, Derry!" hallooed Dick.

"Hello, Dick!" replied Derevaragh, his voice carrying calmly across the space.

"Do you know you are a good thirteen miles from home?"

"Thank you—I don't mind!"

He waved his hand as they started on again, and looked after them as the spot of red that had been the car decreased in size with a rapidity that made it seem to have melted away from the road before his eyes.

It did not occur to him to wonder how this episode had affected Desda Chessel, because he had not done it for effect. But her silence did recur to him once or twice during his trudge home, and gave him a little pang of apprehension that he could not at first understand. The full meaning of it came to him later, in this wise.

He had reached home and was

wandering about in the sunken garden piecing together the stray bits of eloquence that had come to him on the more distracting highway, when he saw the motorists return. He started forward to the steps, but Alice Tantallion called out to him to stop.

"Don't bother!" she cried. "We are all coming down there to have tea."

He nodded and stood, one foot on the lowest step, waiting for them to descend. But Alice disappeared into the house, and Tantallion and the engineer became absorbed in some fancied ailment of their petted locomotive, and so it was Mrs. Chessel alone who appeared at the top of the steps and came down toward him. She had taken the "silk bag" from her head, and looked quite herself again. But her eyes were clouded with disapproval and the little pang of apprehension shooting into his heart again showed him for the first time conclusively how much it meant to him that she should like him.

"Well," said her voice coldly, "I wonder if you have had a better time than we, after all."

"I certainly have come home in a better humor," said Derevaragh, smiling at her. He took her cloak from her and laid it across the baluster. "If you will come for a walk with me tomorrow morning, I think I can prove to you that it makes one happier than riding in an engine."

"You talk as if I never went walking. I am very fond of it. Only I don't magnify the taste into a pose."

"Ah," said Derevaragh. "You are calling me a poseur, is that it?"

"Aren't you?" she demanded, serenely. She went past him and sat down in an embowered corner where soft rugs hung over the marble seats and where one might be comfortably served with tea. He followed her and sat down facing her. Perhaps she was in the mood for a stimulating quarrel with him, for she was somewhat disappointed to see that he was smiling.

"It depends on what one means by a pose," he replied. "If you mean that I am pretending to be things that I am

not—then no, decidedly. But if a pose is the attitude one takes when one persistently and consistently prefers certain modes of living and thinking whether agreed with by the majority or not, then yes—just as decidedly."

She was silent, looking down at her lovely hands as they lay clasped in her lap. Then, unexpectedly, she leaned forward, resting her elbow on the table between them and stretching out her other hand to him. "I beg your pardon," she said.

Derevaragh's heart gave a jump, like a delighted child. He took the hand in his slowly, looking at its smooth white beauty as if it were a precious stone that lay in his palm. "You need not beg for pardon," he said softly. "There is nothing you could want of me that you could not have for the mere wanting, without even asking." He took her hand by the wrist and turned it over so that it lay palm down upon the table. "How beautiful your hand is," he said.

She drew it away. "You must not say that kind of thing," she said.

His eyes lifted to her face. "Why not?" he asked directly. She was at a loss for an answer. He watched her steadily. The pause drew a flush of discomfort into her face, which, when he perceived it, caused him to look away across the garden, unwilling to distress her.

"What are you thinking?" she asked, almost impatiently, as she saw his eyes settle no less absorbingly upon some indefinite object across the garden.

"I was thinking," said Derevaragh, "that your spirit must look like the beautiful princess of Phthi."

"What is the princess of Phthi?" inquired she.

"She is the loveliest thing in the museum of strange things where she abides. She died more thousands of years ago than we have any reason to be sure of, and she is wrapped and bound and swaddled and confined and enclosed in yards and yards and yards of mummy bandage."

Desda sat back on her bench. She could see Dick and Mrs. Tantallion

coming down the steps, reading together the page of a paper.

"You are very rude," she said sharply.

"I told you you should have anything you wanted of me, and you asked to be told what I was thinking. I was also wondering, if someone were to unwind the mummy cloth, and take away the gilded mask and all that—if your spirit would fall to dust when the air of heaven struck upon it?"

"You need not tell me any more," she said, so gently that he looked up at her quickly. To his amazement her eyes had the crystal look of tears. But before anything further could be said between them, they were joined by Alice and Dick, who came flourishing the paper.

"The murder is out, Derry!" he called cheerfully.

Mrs. Chessel, looking up, recognized, as Derevaragh could not, the pages of a paper that served as a salver on which to pass about the latest scandals, and "grinds," and doings of the colony. "What's out?" she asked as indifferently as if a moment before she had not been on the verge of tears.

"Where is the tea?" asked Mrs. Tantallion, the instinct of a hostess dominating all others.

"I see it coming now," said Derevaragh, looking back to the little door in the depths of the house wall whence a servant had just emerged wheeling the tea-cart.

"I must say, for a murderer, you take discovery very calmly," objected Tantallion. "Listen to this:

"The most eccentric man under heaven is at present among us. He is Michael Derevaragh, the reformer, who refused to bear his titles of Earl of Aughrun, Viscount Abbelax, and Baron Kilcullen, and gave them away, together with the estates, messuage, lands, tenements, hereditaments, premises, perquisites, and rents."

Derevaragh flung up his hands. "Officer, I will go quietly," he said, laughing and frowning all at once. "Only do not rehearse my crimes before the ladies. Let us have—tea!"

"Fancy anyone preferring not to be an earl!" cried Alice Tantallion, as she

began to prepare their tea, obedient to his cry of distress.

"Did you really do that?" inquired Desda Chessel, her eyes rather wide with astonishment.

"He did, indeed!" Tantallion answered for him. "The great bally ass!"

"Why?" she said. This time her eyes insisted that no one but himself should answer for him. His look met hers gravely. He was conscious that some change was taking place between them, though what it was he could not say. He could see a difference in her eyes, and he felt a difference in his own as they looked at her earnest, lovely face. The simple little answer he had made to Will sprang to his lips in reply to her question.

"I do not believe in earls and lords and barons," he said.

VI

IT turned cold in the night, and the dawning day brought from the ocean a dogged and persistent rain. Nothing was astir in the outside world save the tossing branches of the trees and the milky drifts of fog. But Michael Derevaragh had eyes for nothing but the clock, that was stolidly and unfeelingly lingering over every moment that separated his loneliness from the appointed hour when she had promised to join him.

Eleven o'clock came—as eleven o'clock always does—and it went—according to its invariable custom. The clock struck the half-hour and yet no Desda. He scrawled a little note on a bit of paper torn from his note-book, and sent it up to her.

In a few moments she appeared on the stairs, in a soft white wool gown with a golden girdle. When she caught sight of him in the hall, she stopped. "It is raining, you goose," she said calmly.

Derevaragh laughed at the greeting. "Raining—I see it is. What has that to do with it?" He came to the stairs, looking up at her with the happiest kind of eyes.

"Why, I can't go to walk in the rain!"
"Why not?"

She caught an impatient breath.
"I should be soaked."

"What of that?"

"I don't like it. Don't try to be so original."

"Have you ever tried it? Have you ever gone out in long boots and a very short skirt and a warm jacket and a little cap tied down firmly over your hair, and put your hands in your pockets, and trudged along in the rain?"

"No," she admitted after a pause.

"Then come and try it. What a strange woman you are to give things up before you've tried them!"

"I suppose my hunting clothes would do," she said doubtfully.

"Yes. If the boots are stout."

"Oh, don't!" she cried, half laughing. "If there is one kind of man I loathe it is the kind that always worries about one's boots!" She turned and started up the stairs. "I won't be long," she called over the baluster to him.

It did seem interminably long to him, however, before she came down again, armed cap-a-pie for a battle with the storm. He did not mention the boots, but he did look at them and saw that they were good. She seemed to him more beautiful "clothed all in leather with cap under the chin," than she had been even in her most brilliant moments. When they stepped out into the cold attack of the raining day, the color came to her cheeks and a light to her eyes.

"Ah, you do like it!" he cried, triumphant.

"Isn't it fun?" she said.

"Child!" He looked at her as she strode along beside him, making good her boast of her fondness for the exercise, the rain pelting good-naturedly into her smiling face. Never had she seemed so alluring, so lovable.

"Are you warm enough? It is really cold. You see even I am wearing a coat, against my usual habit."

She nodded contentedly. "It wouldn't do for you to catch cold, and

have to address your audiences as 'Vreds and vello-bed,' would it? When do you speak again?"

"Tomorrow night in New York, the next night in Boston again."

"I should like to hear you speak some time," she said.

In the force of the wind, it was almost impossible to converse comfortably. And yet it might have been accomplished with a little effort, had not a desire for silence crept in upon the two of them. It was an odd thing, this being together. It seemed quite sufficient a happiness for all present needs. They walked side by side, their arms often touching, their eyes on the road ahead, their steps swinging together. "What were there to say?"

The rain splashed into puddles, making the little water-fairies jump up at every stroke to see what was the matter. Belated raindrops from the trees added great numbers to the downpour. The wind swept it about in circles and whipped sly spatterings into their eyes. Ahead of them the road lay glistening and empty, save for one solitary foot-traveler, whom they would soon overhaul. Overhead the gray sky hung down, indeed, "like a wet brush." In a field to the westward a flock of geese were making a raucous and doleful prayer for fair weather. The smell of the tonic sea thrilled in their nostrils.

Desda confessed to herself to having known no such happiness in all her life. She stole a glance at the face, so little above her own, and was glad of the look of happiness that irradiated it.

"What a funny little lock of white hair you have," she said, smiling.

"The better to inspire your reverence, my dear," he said. "Did you ever meet a wolf, Red Riding Hood?"

"I can't say," she answered laughing, "that he has ever presented himself at my door."

"Ah, no," said Derevaragh. "Yet I daresay the man ahead of us here has got out by the window many a time to avoid that shaggy guardian of the portal."

"Or into someone's else window, quite likely!"

"Why be so harsh?"

"Why so lenient? He looks quite like a burglar, or a tramp, to me. How does he look to you?"

"Cold," said Derevaragh, with a smile.

Indeed, as they came near the man, it was apparent that no such sodden threadbare garments could prove any protection from the raw chill of the sea-coast storm. From the general appearance at his neck, so far as one could judge à travers his upturned coat collar, one would be safe in wagering he wore little beneath that tattered outer-garment. Derevaragh, more skilled in estimating the condition of the poverty stricken, was already unbuttoning his overcoat.

"Don't give him money!" said Desda in a whisper.

"I haven't any!" returned he, with a laugh. Then as they came abreast of the shivering wretch, he slipped out of the coat and laid it over the tramp's shoulder. "Here, old man, get into that," he said pleasantly. "Cold day, isn't it?"

The man muttered something, too amazed to be coherent. He felt of the thick frieze coat as if he believed himself dreaming, and were pinching the sleeve of it to awaken himself. Derevaragh merely nodded at him with a smile and walked on beside Desda, turning up his own coat collar now, and affecting not to see that her chin had risen a degree or two during this episode. He was confident that she was going to find fault with him, as indeed she was.

"Now that is what I call ridiculous!" she said at last.

"Of course you do," he answered, cheerfully. She was a bit nonplussed at the admission. And the difference of opinion might have come to an end there had he not unguardedly added, "Given a silly standard, any sensible thing becomes a pose."

She was wounded at the tone in which he produced the last word. And she chose to show it by avoiding it herself.

"Do you call it sensible to rush up to a beggar and give him a handsome coat?"

"The man wasn't begging," said Derevaragh.

"No—but you are—begging the question."

He smiled at her, briefly. "Sensible? Why, yes, it appeals to me as eminently sensible. Here are two men—one is warmly dressed, in good, solid, well-woven clothes; the other is scantily clad, the cold air finding no hindrance in his threadbare rags. Now here is a coat. In the name of sense, which of these should have it?"

"You say *a* coat. It was *your* coat."

"Certainly it was," replied Derevaragh. "If it had not been, I would have had no right to assign it to him."

"Oh, nonsense!" she said, but she was laughing. "In all probability he will sell the coat and get drunk on the proceeds."

Derevaragh shrugged his shoulders. "Ah, there you have it. That's the part of the affair which is not sensible, if you will! But I cannot follow the coat all my life and see that it is not sold for a night's stupor! For that matter, when I bought the coat, the tailor may have spent the price of it for rum."

"That is very different," she said.

"On the contrary, drunkenness is very much the same thing in all men."

"And so is death," retorted she. "Wherefore we will turn the corner here and take the short cut home, for I am afraid you will catch cold now. Pride may keep one warm, but folly never did."

With the caprice of a shifting wind, the storm vanished in the early afternoon, and a warm sun shone until its setting hour.

It was that night that the Tantallions gave a ball, to which came the colony and his wife, very resplendent, very noisy and very thirsty. Derevaragh had been sorely tempted to beg that he might be excused from the dinner, and the subsequent rout—perhaps particularly since the appearance of the impertinent information concerning his eccentricities—but on reflection he

feared to disarrange Mrs. Tantallion's table plan (he had been shown by that discreet lady that he was to sit next Mrs. Chessel!), and so consented to suffer himself to be introduced into the correct garb that Dennis had prepared for him. It is to be believed that Dennis's pride in his master's appearance went far to render him unfeeling toward his master's very evident misery, for indeed the hideous lines of the conventional coffincloth and bristol-board were most becoming to him, in the strange way they have of drawing upon custom for their ratification.

It did not escape the eyes of Desda Chessel that he was the most distinguished man present, and when the conversation had become sufficiently well-established to permit of it, she turned to him with a sparkle of laughter in her eye, and said softly, "They tell me you hate this kind of thing. Yet you do it well."

He nodded his head. "I dare say, my dear lady, that if necessity demanded I could dress myself as Mercutio, and behave as if I'd been after wearing silk tights and a jeweled belt all my days!"

The dinner seemed to him interminably long, between the exasperating impossibility of talking uninterruptedly to the beloved lady on his right, and the wearisome necessity of listening to the detested creature on his left, who had also read the cursed paragraphs in the society journals and maintained that, odd as it might seem to him, she admired his consistency, though anyone could see he was a lord, and she for one should always think of him as one.

He did manage to escape, when the ladies left the dining-room, by the gracious intercession of a telegram, which required an immediate and carefully constructed answer. After it had been despatched he did not return to the smoke-filled dining-room, but went out into the labyrinthine garden, laced back and forth between rows of sharp-cornered hedges. Ostensibly he had come out there to think over the speech he was to deliver the

evening following in New York, but actually there was little accomplished save a retrospective portrait of Desda, and a careful counting over of those few words they had had together.

More than an hour later, when he had gone down into the sunken garden—to avoid the guests of the dance as they arrived, he told himself; to be in the place where lately he had touched her hand, he knew to be the truth—he saw her come out of the brilliant light of the veranda with a cavalier and wander along the upper walk, by the parapet that guarded the edge of his dungeon. Drawn back into the shadow, he watched her, and noticed a weariness in her step that distressed him.

Presently the man turned and hurried back to the house, apparently on some errand for her.

He could see her now, alone, as she leaned against the marble wall, with her back almost toward him, her bare shoulders curving with the poise of her backward-thrown head.

Derevaragh turned swiftly and looked about him among the late Summer roses he had noticed earlier in the day for one sufficiently large to master the distance between them. There was one almost at his hand. He flung it deliberately and forcefully, and it fell upon her skirt with a little tug, like the hand of a child.

She looked down at it, and then turned without stooping. He smiled as he noticed that it had not startled her.

"I cannot see you," she said quietly, "but I know your aim. Won't you come up here?"

"If you are going to be alone," he answered.

She leaned and caught up the flower still clinging to her laces. "No, wait there," she said.

As she came down the stair toward him, into the deeper shade of the lower garden, she brought a starry radiance of her own in her whiteness. From her dress and from her beautiful skin there seemed to emanate a clear effulgence, that yet did not dispel the dark-

ness. On the contrary, the soft shadows of the air clung to her, crowded close about her, serving only to throw her into braver relief. She moved with the deliberation of a woman who had always known the world would wait for her.

As she came near him, his rose in her hand, she looked up at the house that seemed a mere lantern, for the brilliant light within. "How gay it looks," she said idly.

"Someone always fiddles while Rome burns," he answered.

She turned her face to him slowly. "Is there any harm in Alice's party?" she asked him.

"Do you find any particular good in it?"

She did not, but she lied to him.

"Then you are leaving it against your will?"

"No," she said, and this time she was telling the truth. "You could not have persuaded me to come against my will."

"I didn't ask you to come at all," he said, mildly.

"I know it. The wind blew me a rose," she said, and they laughed. They strolled on toward the end of the garden together, and she struck at the wall of the terrace lightly with the rose at every step or so. After a few moments she took the rose in both hands and lifted it near her face, as if she questioned it, when she asked, "Where is Rome burning?"

"The glare of the flames is reflected in your own eyes," he answered gravely. "We are in the very midst of it. Every ducat of your fortune is red hot with the nearness of the conflagration. Can it be possible that you do not see it?"

"I don't want to see it."

"Ah!" He drew in his breath as she confirmed his contention. "But you like the fiddling."

"Well," she said almost angrily, "we pay the fiddler very well."

"You also dance very well," he said. "I watched you through the window for a few moments about an hour ago."

She was silent.

"You are glad of that," said Derevaragh. "It pleases you, doesn't it?"

She suddenly flung the rose away and turned on him furiously. "If it does? If it does?" she said. "Great heavens! who are you to come among us and protest against all our pleasures, and probe for our faults, and condemn our ways of life? What have you ever done but condemn and destroy? Is that praiseworthy?"

"I have done more, I hope," he replied, "but even to destroy is necessary. The ploughshare wounds the earth, but corn is sown in the furrow. I am one of those who have put their hands to the plough. I do not expect to be known even by my dead name to those who sow the grain."

"There is grain already grown," she retorted. "Why don't you reap it and feed the hungry? Isn't that better than writing books and making speeches?"

"To feed the hungry is to die leaving the hungry still unfed," said Derevaragh. "We are seeking to abolish the class of the hungry, so that no man need hunger unless he choose. And very few, Nuala, very few choose it!"

"What did you call me?"

"Nuala—it means 'beautiful shoulders,'" he said, simply.

She would have liked, because she was at war with him, to have reproved him for his boldness. But he made her feel that, since she had uncovered them, the boldness, if any, was hers. Yet she did not draw her scarf, for he made her feel, too, that it was right and natural they should be seen. His comment brought no hint of personality. He merely said that she was beautiful, not that he thought her so.

Her mind went back to what they had been saying. "I took your book to read," she said; "'The Augean Stable.'"

He said nothing.

"I didn't like it," she went on, with a petulant movement of the head. "It made me restless. I didn't want to know what you were telling."

"That is not quite true," said Derevaragh gently. "You would not have

shunned it if you had not known what it was. The details perhaps were new to you, but the sum and substance of it all was known to you. Your own husband helped to make the details I laid before you. What you felt was a disinclination to face the admission squarely."

"Yes," she said, and the word was almost like a sob.

He looked at her in the dusk and his eyes were more tender than he knew. "What a pitiless tyrant you are to yourself!" he said.

"I don't think I understand you." She lifted her face to look at him, and there was a new look upon her—the docile ready look of a child who waits to have a lesson made more clear.

"You keep yourself under so ruthlessly," he said. "You won't allow yourself to grow, to learn, to get on. You grind your soul down as the old barins their serfs. What is the tyranny that makes for the most debased and ignorant of slaves compared with the stultifying restraint that makes a woman keep herself from reading a book that might enlighten her a little!"

She sat down in the corner of a seat that faced the house. It all seemed unreal to her—the light, the music, the dancing, the silly chatter and noise. And was she a part of it, suddenly thrown off into this encircling reality of the good, clean night?

"I must let you go back to your friends," Derevaragh was saying, "because they will be wondering where you are. But I have a message to give you before you go. I shall not see you again for a couple of days, and I want you to say it over to yourself while I am gone. You have read it, but not perhaps for many years—you will not think the less of me for borrowing another's words, who said it so much better than I could ever hope to do?"

He stood beside her, one knee on the stone bench in which she sat, one hand resting near her golden, young head.

"Tell me," she said, under her voice.

There was a little pause, as if he were marshalling his memories. Then his

deep, rich Irish voice began the speaking of another man's words.

"I tell you that this is to me quite the most amazing among the phenomena of humanity. I am surprised at no depths to which, when once warped of its honor, that humanity can be degraded. I do not wonder at the miser's death, with his hands, as they relax, dropping gold. I do not wonder at the sensualist's life, with the shroud wrapped about his feet. I do not wonder at the single-handed murder of a single victim, done by the assassin in the darkness of the railway, or reed-shadow of the marsh. I do not even wonder at the myriad-handed murder of multitudes, done boastfully in the daylight by the frenzy of nations, and the immeasurable, unimaginable guilt, heaped up from hell to heaven, of their priests and kings. But this is wonderful to me—oh, how wonderful—to see the tender and delicate woman among you—"

Derevaragh's voice ceased a moment, and then went on as before:

"—the tender and delicate woman among you, with her child at her breast and a power, if she would wield it, over it, and over its father, purer than the air of heaven, and stronger than the seas of earth—nay, a magnitude of blessing which her husband would not part with for all that earth itself, though it were made of one entire and perfect chrysolite—to see her abdicate this majesty to play at precedence with her next-door neighbor. This is wonderful—oh, wonderful—to see her, with every innocent feeling fresh within her, go out in the morning into her garden to play with the fringes of its guarded flowers, and lift their heads when they are drooping, with her happy smile upon her face and no cloud upon her brow, because there is a little wall around her place of peace; and yet she knows, in her heart,"

—Derevaragh's voice deepened gently, and his hand laid itself upon hers—"if she would only look for its knowledge, that outside of that little rose-covered wall, the wild grass, to the very horizon, is torn up by the agony of men, and

beat level by the drift of their life-blood!"

The silence of the garden closed in upon them as his voice ceased. They remained motionless, while a little cloud could drift across a star. Then his hand closed on hers and he drew her to her feet, and led her slowly down the long, misty darkness to the farther stairs. There he half lifted her hand, half bent his head, and laid a little kiss upon her fingers.

He stood at the stair, watching her as she mounted slowly. But when she had disappeared from his sight, he went back and sought for the rose that she had thrown away.

VII

DENNIS, as he was putting in order the rooms apportioned to his master, after that individual's early and somewhat tempestuous departure the next morning, was surprised when there appeared at the open door of the little library a very gracious vision. It may be that the beauty of woman has known no higher mark than in the bejeweled barbaric splendor of Madame Cleopatra but Desda Chessel, in crisp white lawn, with a gold comb retiring abashed in her more triumphantly golden hair, and a look of the first rose awake in the early dawn about her shining morning face, was something well worth looking at in any event. Dennis, who had not seen her before, came very near to crying out, in his brief and rapturous amazement.

"Mr. Derevaragh has gone?" she inquired, with a smile that lifted forty years from Dennis's heart. "I wanted to borrow one or two of his books."

"They be all here, madam," said Dennis, motioning toward the writing-table, though without taking his eyes from her, as indeed it would be too much to expect of him that he should, "save and except the two or three little fellows that he must be seeing every day and has carried with him."

"Thank you," she said, coming close to the table. Her firm, sweet, white

hands began turning the books over reverently. "You have been with Mr. Derevaragh some time?" she asked, her eyes lifting with a kindly look.

"I have that—seven years before he was born!"

Her laugh rang out with a charming sympathy. "You must know him very well," she said.

The old eyes of Dennis looked off a bit. "Well, my lady," he said, so absorbed in his half-sad thought that he bestowed the title upon her quite unconsciously, "perhaps you'd be hitting the mark closer if you said I love him very well. For it is not in the nature of things that an ignorant old servant should understand a man like that."

With a gravity upon her face that yet seemed to smile at him, she sat down in the chair before the table and drew some of the books toward her. "Tell me about him," she said.

"I would not know what to be telling you," said Dennis, helpless in the face of the immensity of the subject.

"Well, tell me what he does."

The old man shifted to one foot, and pleated his dusting-cloth between his trembling old fingers. "Well, he goes about the world, my lady, trying to show people that the only way to get on is to help the world on, that's the truth of it. I get sore vexed with him, oftentimes. Never a thought for himself, never a notion of resting. Off to one side of the earth today, off to the other tomorrow. And when he does get home, off he is pestering with his creameries and embroideries and what not."

She lifted her eyes again from the page she had not been reading. "You say 'home'—where is that?"

"By rights, of course, my lady, his home is the castle of Aughrun, but it's part of his strangeness that he should like better to be a plain man and live in a plain house."

"But where?" she said.

"Near Montrath, in Ireland. A little bit of a house it is, more like one room than a house, though it be two stories high. And nothing in it but

one table and some chairs and more books than a man could do with."

"And do you live there with him?"

"Just the two of us," said Dennis, sadly. She caught the note in his voice and smiled at him. He smiled back at her appreciatively "True for you, I shall never cousin to the idea of his throwing away the earldom—for he is an Aughrun if there ever was one, barring his queer notions—and I should have liked to see him at the castle with grand folks about him, and a grand wedding, and a grand lady for his wife. You'd think it was an old coat, this business of being born an earl," he added, disgustfully.

She had risen again beside the table, with a few of the books in her hands, and she stopped to look at him with a gentle gravity. "You must not mind his throwing it away," she said. "Think of it another way. Remember that you have the privilege to serve a man to whom an earldom was too slight an honor to be regarded."

He stood looking after her in humble adoration as she went away, taking the books with her.

It was much later that same morning, when Dickie, emerging upon the veranda, found her lying in a long chair with the same books upon her lap.

"I say, you look as fresh as a clean cuff," he said, smiling. "But then you didn't see the game out, did you? Alice told me you climbed out and went above early. She'll be down in a minute—too tired to stay in bed, she said she was." He dropped into a swinging seat near her and commenced its creaking sway. "Derry's gone off to speechify down in New York," he said. "What do you think of him?"

"Think of whom?" asked Alice, as she came out through the long window. "Morning, Desda. Don't please ask me if I am tired. I was thinking this morning that we do work harder for our pleasure than for anything else."

"Pity Derry isn't here to hear that promising speech," said Tantallion, drawing her down beside him in the swing. "I was just asking Desda what she thinks of him. He's a queer fish,

but somehow you can't help admiring him. I must say he likes things a little too different from the ordinary run to suit me. Take things more or less as you find them, that's my creed. They're good enough for me, as it is."

Desda laughed a little softly. "That is because we are—all of us—just 'threads in the garment,' and 'one thread desires to be in no way distinguished from the other threads.'"

"Where did you get that?" inquired Alice, hearing the quotation marks in the other woman's voice.

"From one of his own prophets," said she. "We are just that, all of us. But do you know what he is—he is 'the purple border, that small and brilliant part which gives beauty and lustre to the rest.'"

Tantallion was all grotesque apprehension. "Don't you go and fall in love with him, Desda!" he said warningly. "That would be too dreadful!"

Alice's eyes were alight instantly. The words love and marriage are to a young matron what the notes of "Forward-Charge!" on a bugle are to a cavalry horse. "I don't see why," she objected.

"Please don't discuss it," said Desda, with some finality. "It is most distasteful to me."

The swing creaked to and fro, consentingly. "I wonder, though," said Alice after a long pause, "if he does do any real good with his work. I wonder just how much he does accomplish."

Desda turned open the book in her hand to the place where she had been reading. "'What good, then, did Priscus do, who was but a single person? Why, what good does the purple do to the garment?' You see how apt am I in my quotations this morning," she added, smiling.

Tantallion sat up. "Are those his books you have?" he inquired, anxiously.

"They are," replied Desda, with some defiance.

With a serio-comic groan, the master of the house lay back again upon the cushions. "And she said it was distasteful to her," he said sadly. Sud-

denly he burst into a merry laugh. Dick's laugh was almost as round as his own bald head. Even Desda, vexed with him as she was, could not help smiling as she listened to him. "Think of Desda," he cried, when he could become articulate, "married to a man who prefers to travel on foot, who lives in one room, and believes in the equality of men! Desda could keep her diamonds in the broken teapot and hang her Paquin frocks behind the kitchen door. And when the Van Tooters came to call she could open the door for them herself, and hide her apron in the umbrella-stand."

Mrs. Chessel smiled at him forgivingly, for there was obviously no object to be attained in reproving him. Moreover, it was his wont to speculate upon the results of her possible matrimonial ventures, and why should she suddenly resent his impertinent absurdity? But she rose from her chair, gathering the books in the curve of her arm. "You are in an impossible humor today," she said. "I find your jokes, and the crunch of those pathetic chains, equally unendurable."

"Don't forget to dress before luncheon for the Richmond garden party," called Alice as her guest passed into the house. "What are you going to wear?"

"Her brown holland, with white turnovers and a blue-checked sunbonnet," said the irrepressible Tantallion.

Mrs. Chessel turned in the window way, and wrinkled her nose at him vulgarly. "I am going to wear an embroidered lingerie princess frock with a rope of pearls," she said, "an exhibition of bad taste much in favor at present."

"I am crushed," quoth Richard, as she disappeared.

Mrs. Chessel went to her own rooms, and sitting down before her dressing-table drew toward her the heavy silver jewel-case that no one but herself knew how to open. One by one, and idly, she took out the glittering ornaments that filled it. Peter Chessel had liked diamonds, on his wife. There was one collar of the stones under her hand at the moment, that he had brought to

her one day when the price of the people's meat had gone five cents higher. Five cents had seemed very little to her, as he told her, laughing—yet this strange man who had so suddenly come to torment her had called the necklace "a chain of hungry children's tears"—for the incident he had guessed at in his book was startlingly near to truth. She piled the rainbow gleams into her palm and tossed the handful into the air. They struck together with a musical little tinkle. She lifted it and clasped it around her throat. In the radiant sunlight of her room, the jewels blazed like white fire, lending their own perfection to her beauty.

"Hungry children's tears!"

She fairly snatched the necklace away. Then with a rising color—for her maid at the moment entered, and seemed to have seen the action—she examined the fastenings as if they were at fault, and bade the woman come and see if she could clasp it on securely.

"I do believe, madam, they are handsomer in the daytime than in gaslight. My, aren't they beauties?"

"Did you ever wonder," said Mrs. Chessel, who had had the maid some years in her employ, and often talked with her, "why some people have diamonds and some have not?"

The woman looked a bit surprised at the question. "Lord, no, Mrs. Chessel," she said. "Some has to be poor, and some has to be rich. It isn't every man knows how to make money, like Mr. Chessel did. I remember the evening he brought this very collar home to you. Ah, he was a kind man, Mr. Chessel. Always a pleasant word for every servant in the house. Everybody seemed to be something to him—so many makes you feel as if you was like the tables and chairs. But Mr. Chessel always took an interest. That time, now, when Thomas broke his leg out in the stable, do you mind how Mr. Chessel had the room fixed up for him and sent for his wife and little girl to come and stay, and even brought a dolly for the child? How many busy men would have thought of that?"

Desda drew a long breath. "Did you ever hear anyone, Mary, say anything against him?"

"Against him! Against Mr. Chessel! Well, I guess not," said the woman heartily. "If you could have seen the servants crying like children all over the house the day he died!"

Mrs. Chessel leaned her elbows on the dressing-table, and ran her long, sweet fingers into the golden masses of hair at her temples. She was silent, looking at herself in the glass. Then, very slowly, she straightened in her chair.

"Take the collar off, Mary," she said. "I am going to wear my pearls this afternoon."

VIII

It was the evening following. Desda Chessel, radiant in indescribable glories, sat through a long martyrdom, called a dinner, at the Tantallions', where the principal topic of conversation had been the eccentric Derevaragh. It had caused her infinite unhappiness, this discussion of him which naturally was but the beginning of a discussion of his intents and purposes, interlarded with shallow witticisms and stupid criticisms, and her own discomfort had made her realize how evenly was her own heart divided, for and against him. The life they led, she and these people around the flower-and-crystal laden table, she could see was very far indeed from a reasonable centre, and yet equally far seemed the possibility of living any other.

She sat listening to questions as to his sincerity, and to the inevitable bringing forward of the indisputable proof of his having renounced all worldly goods and titles. She heard his speech parodied, his nationality ridiculed—but always kindly, for there sat at the head of the table the man who loved him as David had loved Jonathan, but who was, even so, disposed to join his voice to those who called him a dreamer and an inworldly fool.

Tantallion saw her eyes wonder at him, and he lifted his glass to her, smiling. "I have called him a fool to his own old face," he said merrily. "He'll not begrudge me the opportunity to do it behind his back. Here's to Derry-down-Derry, a dear fool, and the best fellow that ever scorned a peerage."

He waited for her to lift her glass, and did not see, as he drank his wine, that she had not set her lips to hers.

But there was a man at the table who did not enter into the discussion, and whose was the only opinion she desired to hear. He had come particularly in the hope of seeing Derevaragh, for he was a student of sociology himself, a man about sixty, white-haired and imposing, with a reputation for infallibility, probably dependent upon the long array of initials that followed his distinguished name, and, oddly enough, a half responsibility for the existence of the most feather-brained, noisy young woman in Newport, who was also at the table.

It was to him that Desda turned when the rest of the company became wearied of the subject and drifted off to Lily Norman's losses at bridge, and Mrs. Pettit's new toy spaniel. "Dr. Thurlow," she said, "what do you think of Mr. Derevaragh's ideas?"

"My dear young lady, they are not Mr. Derevaragh's ideas," replied the authority, somewhat fussily. "They have been preached and practised a score of times since my days began. They are visionary and impractical. They have been exploded twenty times. Every now and then a man is born in the world who has the peculiar type of skull necessary to produce the peculiar type of brain which can accept and subscribe to these peculiar theories. Equally often is a man born with the shape of skull and brain necessary to produce an invention which he firmly believes to have solved the secret of perpetual motion. Who hasn't said that genius and lunacy are sometimes indistinguishable?"

"Have you read Mr. Derevaragh's book, 'The Augean Stable'?"

"I have reviewed it, my dear Mrs.

Chessel, for the leading news here and in England. It is charmingly written, it is extravagant, it is iconoclastic, it is not at all accurate as to its facts and data, and it has been consigned to those shelves of my library where I keep the interesting but unreliable matter put forth of the subject which is my specialty." He smiled at her benignly through his glasses. "But believe me, my dear lady, you were never meant to distress your head with these problems. The probabilities are they will never be solved. Inninety-nine chances out of a hundred this particular world was intended to be no better than it is, just as the first grade in a school is not supposed to have third-grade lessons. And in any event, flowers and beautiful women are their own excuse for being."

It was certainly true that if Derevaragh's hand had unwrapped even so little of the "mummy bandage" as to prove that it was removable, these others among whom her whole life had been lived, as quickly had replaced it in his absence. She thought of him, as the dinner drew to its close in a stimulated chatter and permissible noise, as infinitely distant, as a person, indeed, on whose face she might never look again, as a clean-hearted dreamer whose place was anywhere but near her in the pageant of artificiality and superficial achievements. She belonged to the class who refused to take life seriously, who regarded the space between birth and death as a recess in school, when one should play, and play, and play, and go in away from the sunshine quite tired enough to be content that playtime was over. There was almost always one strange child in a school, who liked to do sums and lessons, and would even work over them in recess-time. But he sat alone and the other children laughed at him. It was not to be expected that they should give up their play and offer to help him at his gratuitously chosen labor.

Thus it was that when Derevaragh joined them about eleven o'clock, after the dinner guests had all gone on to

subsequent entertainment, and the wearied householders were refreshing themselves with sandwiches and champagne in Dick's own *casa innominata* he found her infinitely far removed from the place where he had left her, unutterably beyond the reach of his hand.

There was no greater proof possible of Derevaragh's earnest sincerity in his work than that, as he had faced his audiences on the two previous evenings, all thought of the woman he had grown so suddenly to love had been swept from him. It was no less true, however, that when his speech was over, and his searching questioning at an end, and the assembly reluctantly suffered him to depart, back went his thought to her with the elasticity of a released willow bow.

Nothing else, in all probability, could have made him so thoroughly realize his love for her than the finding of her as he did, with all her traditions marshalled like a picket between them. He had come breathlessly back to her from his days of work, and she scarcely greeted him. He saw that the gilded mask had been replaced upon the face of Princess Phthi. She was ablaze with jewels, she was wearied in a worthless endeavor, she was cynical, cold, distant. When he came in, and Tantallion and Alice greeted him, she joined her voice to theirs in a courteous murmur and her eyes went back to the yellow fountain in her glass.

"You must have come while we were at dinner. Why did you sneak away?" demanded Dick.

Derevaragh smiled. "Well, to tell you the truth, my silly fame is too much for me. I should have enjoyed meeting your friends, Mrs. Tantallion, if the miserable story of my earldom had not leaked out through that silly old Dennis. But as it is now, when I make my appearance they feel that I have come to be patted on the back—one might as well commend a Buddhist for not becoming a Mennonite."

"Let us go out on the veranda—the house is hot," said Alice Tantallion, rising. Her husband and guests fol-

lowed her obediently. She had always said, in confidential conjugal conversations, that Desda's second marriage would be and should be a love match, and she made it a rule to encourage and abet all suitors except those whom she judged guilty of mercenary motives. There had been plenty of both kinds, heaven knows, and she had done her little all to foster the causes of the worthy. And although nothing had ever come of any of her efforts, she remained undiscouraged. It cannot be said that she regarded Derevaragh as a suitable choice. But she had a romantic nature, and, since Desda could afford to, would have seen her married to a fireman had she loved him. Therefore she took her lord and master by the arm and walked him up and down the veranda, to his infinite amusement, and finally she walked him up the veranda and kept him there, settling herself comfortably in a long chair and bidding him make love to her as if they never had been married.

Derevaragh stood near Desda, who leaned wearily against a pillar of the veranda, and who finally forsook its support and sat down in an easy-chair near by. He said nothing at the first, struggling with his sense of bitter defeat.

"Dennis tells me you did me the honor to borrow some of my books," he said at last. "Did they interest you, any of my silent friends?"

"Very much," she said, politely.

He looked at her, long and searchingly. It was then, in that silence, under that look, that she turned away and sought the protection of her chair. She fairly seemed to intrench herself against him. He moved, too, nearer to her, and leaned against the column where she had been standing.

"For the first time in all my life, I have been taught despair," he said. "I thought when I first saw you that Deirdré must have looked like you, and now I am quite sure of it—for her beauty was cursed with the burden of bringing misfortune and pain to others."

"I do not understand for just what sin you condemn me."

"I am not even blaming you," he said. "I said that I was suffering. I am."

She moved restlessly. "I am sorry," she said.

"I am glad of the chance that has been afforded me to tell you this tonight, because tomorrow I am going away. I am going back across the ocean. I thought that after my promise had been fulfilled, as it has, I would stay here, with Dick, and go about making and fulfilling other promises. But it comes to me, as I look at you, that I may destroy myself, and cripple my work if I remain. So I am going. I have undertaken too much to risk my only instruments for the doing it, my courage and my hope. You would rob me of both, if I remain.

"Don't think it is you I love," he continued sadly after a little waiting. "You, as you sit there—Mrs. Chessel, beautiful, selfish, pleasure-seeking, stagnant-hearted—the love inspired by such a picture would be just a sensualist's delight in your physical perfection. The love that is tearing me to pieces is an aching craving for the real you, the noble, compassionate, great-hearted woman that you have crushed away and hidden in your body. I don't believe she is there—I *know* it. I have had glimpses of her. I have spoken to her. Good God, she has cried out to me for help!"

He stood silent a few moments, his head bent.

"I feel as if I were deserting her, leaving her to your cruelty. But somehow I believe that you have actually killed her now. I think you grew afraid of her, when you found that she had spoken with me in spite of you, and, finding imprisonment not enough for your purposes, have killed her entirely. You see, although I stand so patiently beside her prison, she gives me no sign. And your cold eyes defy me so triumphantly. If she would only for an instant, only by a syllable, let me know that she still lived. Desda, Desda!" He bent down beside her, laying his hand upon

hers. "Desda—don't you hear me?"

She drew her hand away slowly, and he pulled himself erect. "It is that armor of diamonds you wear that has turned your heart cold again!" he cried bitterly. "This may be nothing to you, Desda, but another notch upon your stick—for me, it is the breaking of a heart I needed sorely to keep whole!"

He turned his back to her, gripping the rail of the veranda in his two hands. There was a virulent pain in his throat that shamed him. He dreaded to think of the morrow as a child going back to school dreads the first waking in the motherless room. He trembled, physically, in the apprehension of the great desert of years that stretched its loneliness before him. He felt sick at heart, and weary. Even his work, his ambition, became suddenly impossible, unattainable. He felt the sweat of failure in the palms of his hands.

He faced her again, looking at her in the faint starlight, and something moved him to go over and stand near her, and touch her hair gently with his hand. "Poor creature," he said softly. "Oh, poor dear woman, with your load of riches! Gold-pieces make a heavier load than a scrip, with bread and cheese, and a staff. How weary you will be on your long journey! 'Remember that the subjects of tragedies are always the rich—the poor man plays no part in them except in the chorus.' How you do cling to your burdens and your wearisome life! There is a look in your tired eyes that makes my heart sad for you. You have enlisted yourself as one of the army who make war on Time. You wear yourself out trying to kill off the days that constitute his army. The day dawns for you as an enemy to be vanquished. 'What shall we do to kill Time?' How often your officers take counsel about it—what laborious schemes they invent for his demolition. You are half dead this moment with a long day in the field of battle. I won't keep you any longer from your rest.

Only try to remember sometimes that Time has a dreadful ally, whom neither you nor any other being has ever conquered. When you have killed all the days apportioned to you, he will come, and put you underneath his foot. And all your long, wearisome campaign will have been for nothing. Go to your rest, dear. If I have added to your misfortune, I crave your forgiveness. I should be more merciful to a beast of burden than you are to yourself." He half lifted, half drew her to her feet, and led her to the door. "Good night. My prayers go with you." He kissed her two hands slowly, pityingly. "Think of me some day—any day you can. Try to remember that I love you—if ever you should need a little love. Good-night."

And because he did not lift his eyes again to her, he did not see the tears were raining down her face.

IX

"MR. MICHAEL, sir."

Dennis's voice may truthfully be said to have grown old in the service, and yet it was indisputably able, at this late day, to cross a room—particularly a small room, like that of Derevaragh's house—without falling from fatigue upon the wayside.

Yet Derevaragh made no sign of its having reached him. He was standing at one of the curtainless windows of his plain little home in *Inis Fail*, looking out. One would have said there must be something vastly engrossing outside so to hold his attention. But Dennis, almost accustomed as he had become to this profound abstraction of the senses, knew better. He shook his old grizzled head, sadly, and for the second time, lingeringly went back into his kitchen and, with many last looks, closed the door noiselessly.

In another ten minutes, unable to endure the situation, he came to the threshold for the third time. Derevaragh was standing just as he had left him. "Mr. Michael, sir," he ventured again, almost afraid of the sound

of his own voice. Then, as his master made no sign, falteringly he went to his side and touched him on the arm. "Mr. Michael, dear," he said imploringly, "you have not touched the food I set for you."

Derevaragh looked down vacantly at the old face, its wrinkles drawn into a pleasing tangle. "Yes, Dennis," he said kindly. "What is it? What do you want?"

"Will you not eat a bit, Mr. Michael?"

"Eat—why, certainly." He turned from the window and went to the table, where he sat down. Dennis, his hands trembling very much indeed, watched him fixedly. Derevaragh unfolded his napkin, and sat back with a sigh.

"Why, Dennis, do you know," he said, passing one hand over his forehead and hair, "I'm not very hungry today."

The old man came an eager step or two nearer. "I—I took great pains with your luncheon, Mr. Michael," he said unsteadily.

"Ah, you always do," said Derevaragh, "you spoil me, Dennis. You treat me as if I were a child."

"Well, sir, I don't know how you'd be after keeping your soul inside your body without me, that's true for you."

Derevaragh smiled, or seemed to smile. In reality it was such a mere ghost of a smile that it vanished into thin air in a spectrally orthodox fashion. Dennis could have wept at the sight of it.

The Blessed Virgin knew things had been bad enough when they first came back to Ireland. But every day had added its emphasis to the wrongness of the world, until Dennis had been driven many a time to the verge of tears. In his poor humble way he sought to remedy matters—not knowing what was the matter, and having too much a sense of his stewardship to ask—by redoubling his care of the little house and of its master. But he could see that he availed nothing.

Something was gone from Derevaragh's eyes, from his smile, from his step, from his voice. Whenever—and it was very often—Dennis opened his door a

crack stealthily to survey his master, he would see him sitting at the table, his head supported in his hands, or find him standing at the window staring out with sightless eyes. No matter how the faithful creature racked his limited wits and experience for greater comforts to prepare, Derevaragh remained oblivious to them, untempted by the foods that used to please him, uncheered by the wine Dennis had almost to put into his hand.

Today, if anything, things had gone a little worse. Or perhaps it was that Dennis's nerves had endured the strain of anxiety so long that they but seemed so to his over-sensitive imagination. At any rate, when he saw Derevaragh's hand listlessly breaking his bread into crumbs, and putting little or nothing into his mouth, the question that he had a thousand times whispered to himself came from his lips in an audible cry.

"Ah, Mr. Michael, darling, what's the matter with you, boy?"

Derevaragh looked up, and then stared into the fireplace. "I don't know, Dennis—just discouraged, I'm thinking."

"Discouraged, Mr. Michael! When everything is doing so well! You said yourself only a few days ago the new industry was fairly doubling itself."

"Yes, yes, I know. But that's not my doing. It pleases me, of course. But as for me—"

"As for you, Mr. Michael?"

"Well, as Mr. Tantallion would say, 'I'm down and out,' Dennis. I'm discouraged. I've lost all heart for everything." He got to his feet abruptly as he made this confession, and went over to the window. "Never mind me, Dennis," he said, repenting his admission. "I'll get up again. Just give me time." He took down a book from one of the shelves and seated himself with it in the window-place.

Dennis, broken-heartedly gathering his untouched viands into the tray, saw that the page was never turned.

He had but carried the tray into the kitchen, when there came a cheerful knock at the door. Glad of any diversion for the despondent master of his

heart, he hurried to admit the visitor.

It was Father Ferbane.

"Good day to you, Dennis. Good day, Derevaragh!"

Derevaragh rose, the unregarded book still in his hand. "Welcome, father. Have you had luncheon?"

"Luncheon, as you call it, I have. I am off for a tramp to see a sick woman, a couple of miles from here. I came to ask your company on the road. A little walking will set you up, my son."

Derevaragh put down the book. Dennis was already getting his hat and stick. "I'll come," he said, "and thank you kindly for wanting me. I'm bad company, I warn you."

"All you need is legs to walk with me," said Ferbane with a smile. "But I've noticed your mood. You're fair worn out with your travels and your trials. You need to rest your spirit and your body for a time."

Dennis pottered around his master for a moment or two—he would have turned the edge of his trousers from the dust had he not known by experience that under no condition would Derevaragh allow him to perform the service. He let him go at last, glad that the distraction had come to assist him in his effort to rouse the man. He went back to his kitchen, wondering what it was that Derevaragh lacked.

About an hour later another summons sounded at the door, not man-like and authoritative like Ferbane's, but even, quiet, and persistent for all that. Wonderingly—for unexpected guests were rare—he hurried to the door. But the visitor had already opened it and come inside. And Dennis's old eyes nearly fell out of his head when he saw who the visitor was.

She was dressed in dark blue stuff of some kind, that put him in mind of the angel's favorite color as truthfully depicted upon the decorated cards he sometimes received at church. And she had the whitest of ruffles at her throat and wrists. And so beautiful was her golden hair in the sunlight of the room—or was it her hair itself that made the place so radiant?—that he

never thought to wonder at her not wearing any hat. Indeed, the marvel of her being there at all quite swamped any minor ideas.

But the lady herself smiled at him as coolly as if she had just stepped in to borrow some books, and she held out her lovely hand so naturally, that before he knew it he had clasped it as that of an old friend.

"Mr. Derevaragh is not in, madam," said Dennis, trying to recover his senses after this piece of daring, for which, however, he had too much innate grace to apologize, by making a statement of an incontrovertible fact.

But the lady, it seemed, was aware of that. "As a matter of fact," she told him, laughing a little, "I sent him out. Or at least, I sent Father Ferbane to take him out—it's all the same thing."

Dennis looked anciently bewildered. But she saw it and hastened—in her own leisurely fashion—to answer all the questions she knew he would feel it impossible for him to ask.

"Of course, I want to see Mr. Derevaragh very much. I—I shall stay till he comes back. But do you know—you won't think me rude, I am sure—I wanted to see the place first, and get used to the idea of my having come. You see," she really hastily added, "I have come to ask Mr. Derevaragh's advice, and I want to put the matter very plainly before him. I really couldn't think at all over there at Father Ferbane's, with Will and Kitty talking all the time."

Dennis's eyes underwent another dangerous moment of crisis. "Do you say that The Aughrun and Lady Kitty are at the father's?" he cried, feeling his poor old head grow giddy with this sudden amalgamation of circles.

She nodded. "Certainly. They came down with me. You didn't imagine I'd come alone, did you?"

He merely bowed to that. He was a bit too dazed positively to have said what she would and would not do.

"How is Mr. Derevaragh?" she inquired, her voice not at all succeeding in its effort at indifference.

Old Dennis shook his head at the question. "He's very sick," he said sadly.

She flashed around at him. "Sick?"

"In his head, my lady," he replied, lapsing as he always did into the dignity of titles when he spoke to her. "I cannot get him to eat, and he walks about all day staring at nothing, and says he has no heart for anything at all, at all."

Surely it was a very sad case, and nothing about it to please a lady. And yet this strange lady suddenly turned away from him, smiling in a wonderful, dreamy sort of way.

"Will you sit down, my lady?"

"Thank you. I'd rather walk around if you don't mind."

"Shall I be getting you some tea? Or a glass of wine?"

"Nothing, thank you, Dennis. What's in there?"

"My kitchen, my lady."

"May I see it?" She turned to him so kindly and gentle a face that he quite forgave her having smiled at the recitation of his master's ailments. Yet it had been a soft little smile, too, without malice, and probably not intended to offend.

"Sure the place has never seen a prouder day," he answered, holding the door wide open for her to enter. She came past him, and looked about her with the same strange, tremulous smile hovering about her lips.

"And this is where you cook all the lovely things that he won't eat?" she asked.

"It is, my lady. A poor enough place it must seem to a rich lady like you."

She shook her head at him. "It seems the very dearest place I ever saw, all of it," she said. "I should like to live here all my life." She leaned against the table and the dreamy look crept over her whole face. She seemed suddenly to become aware of it, for she banished it, straightening, and said, apropos of the rest of his remark, "Besides, I am not a rich lady." She started back toward the other room, he following her. Indeed, the spell of her

beauty, made infinitely more alluring by her simple dress, was such that in all probability he would have followed her just as willingly if she had suddenly taken it into her yellow head to go to Gondokoro.

"They told me at Mr. Tantallion's house you were one of the richest ladies in the world."

"They don't know what being rich means," she answered quietly. "There is a great deal of money that stands in my name, but it does not belong to me. I am going to use it all in undoing some of the harm done to others in the getting of it."

Dennis flung up his old hands. "There's a pair of you!" he said, dejectedly.

"What?" She said it so suddenly it almost startled him.

"I said there was a pair of you," he repeated.

She smiled again as if she liked to hear him say it, as indeed she must have, having listened to it twice. "And that's what I want to see Mr. Derevaragh about," she concluded; "he will know just the best way of going about it." She stopped by the big bog-wood table, looking at the books.

Dennis was silent a moment or so. Then with great temerity he spoke to her. "Are you main sure you're doing wisely, my lady? If it be Mr. Michael's preachings as has persuaded you to this—I must be telling you he has the gift of talk quite marvelous, indeed he has. He could persuade me I went on wooden legs, I'm sure, if he undertook to do it. You might give all your money away, my lady, and regret it sorely one of these days. The world's been running on a great many years with everybody looking after his own skin. How can you be sure, when he sets up to be so different—that Mr. Michael's in the right, after all?" Thus Dennis, who believed emphatically in lords.

"I'm sure he is right," she said.

"But how, my lady?"

"Because—" she lifted her head from its bending above his books, and then

suddenly turned around to face him. "Because I love him," she said, and the tears in her eyes declared she did.

It was something in the nature of a shock to Dennis, and he stood staring at her for some perceptible space of time. He was slowly realizing what a blind stupid he had been. He was slowly beginning to understand what his beloved master lacked. But before he or she could speak again—and after all, anything further would only have been superfluous—there was a step, and the sound of a door closing in the passage.

"It's Mr. Michael, my lady," whispered Dennis, excitedly, backing rapidly toward his kitchen door. But she merely stood there, though her color

rose into a crimson glory in her cheeks, with the strange little smile upon her mouth.

Derevaragh came to the inner door and entered, and seeing what was standing in his room, stopped there transfixed. So long they all stood motionless it seemed no one of them would ever move again. His eyes, full of uncomprehending amazement, drank in the look of her thirstily. His whole face was a question. But when slowly she stretched out her two arms to him, he started forward with the glad cry of her name and caught her close to him.

And silly old Dennis shut his door upon a sight that set him sobbing like a little child.



IN THE SILENCE

By Arthur Davison Ficke

THE lilies are dead

In their shadowy fold.

Has the last word been said

Ere we greet the night's cold?

Must we go forth with silence between us, knowing our story is told?

I think the hurt bird

Cometh never again.

Nor the intimate word,

After bruising of pain,

Doth return through the silence of twilight, through the twilight of shadowy rain.

My word shall not make

Any moan at thine ear,

Lest thy heart should awake,

And listen, and hear,

And two hearts should wait where one waiteth for music that draweth not near.

Though the dreams be not dead

In their shadowy fold,

Let no word be said

Ere we turn and grow old.

Though I tremble, I gird up my strength; knowing our story is told.

THE WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS

By William Hamilton Osborne

HORNBECK, editor-in-chief, was tired. For three solid hours he had been reading manuscripts. He had ceased, long since, to take note of titles or of authors' names; to save time, he sought merely the kernel in the nut. He sighed.

"I'll read just one more," he said. He shut his eyes, and from among the mass seized one, hit or miss. Then he began to read. In half a minute he began, as he admitted to himself, to "sit up and take notice." It was fiction, real fiction, fiction of the best kind. From the very start it reeked with human nature; it was saturated with human interest. Jaded as he was, Hornbeck found himself climbing gaily, and with springing step, the heights of the writer's ambition; found himself standing unexpectedly, upon the very peak; found himself drinking in a mighty view of life. Then—*darkness*. The author had reached his climax, and had dropped it instantly. The whole thing was art of the highest type. Hornbeck lay back in his chair and gasped.

"By George!" he whispered to himself, "I wonder who did that, after all."

He turned back to the first page. Then he gasped again. "Thunderation!" he cried once more, "it's *Jimmy Elphinstone*."

He called to his assistant. "Say, Mixley," he exclaimed, "read this. It's one of *Jimmy Elphinstone's*. Remember him?"

Mixley nodded. "I know," he said, "I read it. It's one of the best he's ever done. I put it up to you."

"Well," returned the chief, "that isn't the point. Where's *Elphinstone*

been? We haven't heard from him for three years past. I thought he was done for. I thought he had gone up like a rocket and come down like a stick. It would have been just like him—to startle everybody with the glare in the dark sky, and then, to drop. I couldn't imagine *Jimmy Elphinstone* fading away to slow music. Could you?"

Mixley, the assistant, went back to his desk. "It's a good story," he repeated. "I knew you'd like it."

"I'm going to read it again before I go," returned the editor-in-chief.

He read it once more, this time with exceeding care; and only to exclaim once more. His exclamation was due to nothing in the tale. It was quite another thing that startled him.

"Now, what is *this*?" he whispered to himself.

The manuscript was neatly typewritten, and fastened at the top with small brass fasteners. Between the third and fourth pages Hornbeck found something that both he and Mixley had overlooked. It was a narrow strip of paper, also typewritten, thrust almost out of sight. The closeness of the pages toward the top, where they were fastened, held it securely in place. This narrow strip of paper seemed to have been placed there, both to elude and to attract attention. Upon removing the fasteners, and separating the leaves, its discovery would have been assured.

However, there it was. Hornbeck drew it forth, and read it—read it eagerly.

Then, "By George!" he exclaimed once more, with added emphasis. "So

that's the nigger in the woodpile, is it?" he continued. He looked at Mixley. He was going to tell Mixley about it, and then he changed his mind. He swung about in his chair and gazed for a short space of time out of the window and into the vista beyond. Mixley was through for the day. Mixley closed his desk and washed his hands and donned his overcoat and hat, and —went.

Then Hornbeck seized his desk telephone. "Hello," he said, after an interval, "is that you, Westervelt?"

It was Westervelt. "Well, look here," went on Hornbeck, "I may have a job for you. No, I don't want to come down to you—those law offices choke me. Come up here, where I can talk. That's a good fellow. Do. And, say—come up right away."

Within ten minutes Westervelt, counselor-at-law, was there. Hornbeck was anxiously awaiting him. "Now, William Westervelt," went on the editor-in-chief, "I want to tell you something. Three years ago we had a contributor—you may have heard his name. It was James Elphinstone. He was a story-teller—a born story-teller. He knew *how*. Telling a story was breath to his nostrils, life-blood in his veins. Since the year one, other people have been *adding*—I might almost say *padding*, but I won't—have been adding color, atmosphere, character, and ornament to their fiction. But with Elphinstone all these things were *part* of his tale. You couldn't separate any one from the other and leave the thing intact. That isn't all—the big thing about him is that his work was—what shall I say?—the living exponent of life—*real life*. He knew men and he knew women. He could make a story about anybody—even about you, you old cut-and-dried, stick-in-the-mud counselor-at-law."

Westervelt smiled. "He's dead?" he queried.

Hornbeck shook his head. "No, he's not dead. He's told another story. *This* time it's about himself. Read it, if you please."

He passed over to the lawyer, *not* the

manuscript, but the narrow strip of typewritten paper which had been tucked away. Westervelt read it aloud. This is what it said:

DEAR OLD HORNBECK: I am in the Wavecrest Sanatorium at Greenwoods, Conn. I've been here for two years. They won't let me out. I've got to get out. Won't you give me help, help, HELP! For the sake of old times.

J. E.

P. S. If *they* find this, it will never reach you. I think you understand.

"He doesn't want money," said the lawyer.

"Of course not," returned Hornbeck. "He wants to get out. He wants me to get him out. I have thought about it, and I want to get him out. The question is, how can it be done?"

"What's his trouble?" queried Westervelt.

Hornbeck pointed to the typewritten slip. "I told you," he said, "that Elphinstone had told his story there. He has. Do you have to read between the lines?"

"I see," said Westervelt.

"But," went on Hornbeck, "he's not the kind to be kept there. He's too much of a man. . . . When he gets out, we can take care of him, and *make* him take care of himself. You see?"

"Is he legally committed?" queried the lawyer.

Hornbeck shrugged his shoulders. He had told all he knew.

"Most probably," went on Westervelt, "he is not. I've had mighty little experience with these people, but I understand that the sanatoriums have their own way of arranging matters. If a man's kin think it is best to put a man away, the sanatorium people take the written consent—not of one of them—but of *all* of them; even of his close friends. What does this mean? It means that there is no one left who will, in the ordinary course of things, object to the confinement, except the man himself."

"He can," suggested Hornbeck.

"Surely," returned Westervelt, "but *how*? He cannot turn to his relatives

nor to his friends. *He* cannot get out to make any sort of an application. His mail is inspected. Generally, he is a poor, miserable sort of creature who cannot originate things, anyhow. . . .”

“Elphinstone is *not*,” said Hornbeck. “We *must* get him out. How can we do it?”

“We can do it all right,” returned the lawyer, “by a writ of *habeas corpus*. Sanatoriums rarely will attempt to defend such a proceeding. *They* know their rights and the limits of their rights. They are not fools. They understand their business. . . . And,” he added, “it is a good business that they do.”

“In certain cases, yes,” assented Hornbeck.

“You say the word,” concluded Westervelt; “I’ll get him out.”

Hornbeck, next day, wrote to James Elphinstone, accepting his one story, and referring to the other. His letter was one that would pass even a government censor in St. Petersburg. And as he wrote it he felt as though he and Jimmy Elphinstone were grasping hands across a deep gulf.

Elphinstone received his letter and replied to it surreptitiously. “I’ve been here so long,” said Elphinstone, “and it is nearing Easter, and I think—I *hope*, that my people are going to let me out. But if you do not hear from me by the middle of next month, then, for the sake of heaven, come to my aid. You don’t know. . . .”

It was well on toward the latter end of the following month that Hornbeck again sent for Westervelt.

“Westervelt,” said he, “can you go tomorrow?”

“Where?” queried Westervelt.

“To see Elphinstone.”

“Great Scott!” said Westervelt, “I’d forgotten all about him. . . . Yes—no. We’ll make it Wednesday. How’ll that do? I’ll go.”

Hornbeck smiled. “I’ve arranged it all, myself, with Elphinstone,” he said, “and you’re the third party in the conspiracy.”

“The main guy, I hope,” corrected Westervelt.

“You’ll send in the name of *Hornbeck*, Westervelt,” said the editor-in-chief, “and you’ll have no trouble in seeing your man. You’ll know him, because he will step forward immediately as one who has known you all his life, and will call you by name—my name. You see? It’s a story in itself.”

Two days later William Westervelt just missed his train at the Grand Central. He had to wait some thirty minutes. He strolled over to the Hotel Manhattan, and—took a drink. He didn’t even think about it. He did it in the same gentlemanly way that he did everything, and the drink he drank was a gentleman’s drink. Then he took his train.

Greenwoods was but a short distance up the road and when he reached there he found no equipage in sight, and found also that the Wavecrest Sanatorium was some two miles out in the country. He did not mind. The day was fine, the roads were hard, and he was glad to foot it, and to fill his lungs with the free air from the low hills.

The Wavecrest stood on a hill at the end of a long, winding road. It consisted, as he could see, a half-mile away, of a cluster of houses painted white, adorned with comfortable green shutters.

“I wouldn’t mind a good long rest there, myself,” he thought, weary of the ceaseless, dusty grinding of the mill of law. Ahead of him was a country wagon, pulled by two horses. Perched on the seat were two laborers. Just as he caught up with it, for he went the faster, it stopped at a small spring, and one of the men leaped to the ground and drew from the spring a small flask—filled. Evidently this man was a traitor—a smuggler of forbidden things.

“Well,” said this man to his companion, taking up the thread of conversation where he had dropped it for the instant, “I don’t care. They ain’t got no right to keep me here if I don’t want to stay. It’s my business—not

theirs. What's the constitution say? What's the writ of habeas corpus for, I'd like to know?"

Westervelt laughed to himself. The man was not an inmate. He was merely an employee. But upon him and about him was the atmosphere of the place. The burning question in the locality, was this. The thing of supreme moment was the complaint of the inmates against the goad of The Wavecrest.

"Wonderful institution of habeas corpus," whispered Westervelt, somewhat professionally to himself, "sister to the right of trial by jury—wrested by the barons from King John."

He strode up the gravel path. Lined along the broad verandas were young men, old men, middle-aged men; well, sick, lazy, dying; and women, apparently of all sorts and conditions. Westervelt could not know that three of the frowsiest of them were wives of millionaires, resting up against the wear and tear of the coming Summer season. All were listless, and Westervelt's arrival was clearly more than an incident—it was an event. They watched him closely.

"I guess he's a lunger," he heard one flippant convalescent say.

He rang a door-bell. A man in half uniform appeared, to whom Westervelt made a brief announcement.

"Come into the office," said the man.

Westervelt went—somewhat uneasily. He sat there three minutes. At the desk was a female—thin and with the reddest kind of hair—writing in a book. She was very stern, very uncompromising. Westervelt tried to appear at his ease.

"Remarkable day today," he suggested weakly.

She glanced at him for an instant. "It is," she said precisely. She went on writing.

"Wonderful weather yesterday," he persisted.

"It was," she admitted coldly.

"If it only keeps up—" he anxiously returned.

"It will," she snapped, and went on writing. Westervelt trembled. He

didn't like this. Her very presence breathed suspicion—she seemed a female watch-dog. Besides, footsteps outside seemed to linger near the door, and Westervelt felt as though he were being "sized up" by the guardians of The Wavecrest.

Finally an attendant entered. "Come with me," said the attendant. Westervelt assumed that he was to meet James Elphinstone, and braced himself. But he was mistaken. He was ushered into another ground-floor room.

"Dr. Cyphers will see you in a minute," hissed the attendant ominously. For five minutes Westervelt perspired like a criminal about to enter the third degree. Then Dr. Cyphers came. Westervelt's manner became normal. Dr. Cyphers was an ordinary man. Westervelt passed over a card. Upon it was the name of Hornbeck. As he did so a tremor smote him. The die was cast. The first overt act was committed. Dr. Cyphers bowed.

"I'd like to see Elphinstone," said Westervelt.

"Oh, surely," said the doctor. He sidled along the wall, and straightened a picture here and there, glanced out of a window, went into the hall, stood there a moment, and returned. All this time Westervelt was positive the doctor was taking his measure. To this day Westervelt knows not whether these were precautions or merely the imaginings of his own mind. They *seemed* real enough, at any rate. What followed *was* real.

"Come along with me," said Dr. Cyphers. They passed through a corridor, and crossed a lawn. They paused at the entrance of a huge building, and the doctor took from his pocket a bunch of keys. He unlocked a door.

"Regular prison," said Westervelt, with an uneasy laugh.

"Yep," grunted the doctor wearily.

They trotted up the stairs and entered a broad hall, from each side of which there opened bedrooms. An attendant paced up and down this corridor. A moment later this attendant was striding down the hall. Beside

him was a tall young fellow, with a good jaw and a good nose; smooth-shaven; well set up; a man with a wonderful eye. He was, perhaps, thirty-eight years old—possibly not more than thirty-five. As the two approached this young man quickened his steps.

"Hornbeck!" he exclaimed, and in his voice there was a catch that was hysterical, wild, desperate, "Hornbeck—you dear old chap!"

It was real, all this. Elphinstone saw freedom. He was grasping, not only the hand of his co-conspirator, but the hand of liberty. Westervelt was relieved. It was all easy, after all. The doctor, too, seemed relieved.

"Sam," he said, "take Mr. Hornbeck into Mr. Elphinstone's room."

They strolled back to it. In it, beside the bed, was a typewriter, and a neat pile of unfinished work. Across the corridor was another bedroom. Upon it lay a wise young man, college-bred, apparently, with spectacles, reading a magazine. From time to time he glanced at them over his spectacles.

"I've a story, half written, about him," laughed Elphinstone. He chattered on joyously, until the attendant's footsteps were heard at the far end of the corridor. Then something dropped from his face, as might a mask. He clutched the lawyer nervously by the sleeve.

"My heaven, sir," he exclaimed, and in his voice was the wail of the doomed. "My heaven, sir, I thought you'd never come. You don't know what it means—"

He brushed his sleeve across his face. He had been patient these many days and months and years. Suddenly, patience dropped from him. He leaped to his feet.

"I'm going mad," he half-whispered, half-shrieked. There was a sound of hurrying footsteps in the hall. The attendant had heard him. Elphinstone seized a manuscript, and read it aloud, vigorously, in a high-strung voice.

"Mad," he went on, as one who reads, "and all because—"

The attendant stuck his head in the door. "Oh!" he exclaimed, retreating,

and there was a note of respect in his voice, for James Elphinstone was a man who could do what other men could not do, and the attendant knew it. "I beg your pardon," he went on. "I thought you called me. I see you're only reading, sir." He was polite, even obsequious, but Westervelt noted in his glance, innate suspicion, veiled, but there. The attendant once more strode down the corridor.

Westervelt seized the opportunity. He drew from his pocket a bulky document. He drew forth a fountain-pen.

"Sign there," he said, "and there. And be quick about it. Don't read it. It's all true. And once more—there."

Elphinstone obeyed. And again the footsteps came nearer still and nearer.

"How long will it take?" gasped Elphinstone.

"At the outside," returned Westervelt, "two weeks—maybe three."

Their heads had been together—they had talked in lowered tones. Suddenly Elphinstone sniffed the air. Imperceptibly he trembled. Then he sniffed again. He glanced about the room, his own room. Then once more his glance settled upon Westervelt, the counselor-at-law. He sniffed again. Once more he trembled.

What did it mean? It meant that there had been wafted to him upon the pure air of The Wavecrest Sanatorium, an odor. This odor, faint though it may have been, was the odor of the gentleman's drink that Westervelt had drunk that morning while waiting for his train. To Elphinstone it was breath to his nostrils, life-blood in his veins. Once more he clutched the lawyer by the arm.

"You've got to get me out," he said. "I must be free—be free!"

Westervelt got him out. It was all as Westervelt had said. He had been sent there, kept there, had Elphinstone, by virtue of no warrant or authority of law. And, as the barons had wrested the right of habeas corpus from King John centuries ago, so did Westervelt wrest Elphinstone from the embrace of The Wavecrest Sanatorium.

And The Wavecrest, after the fashion of King John, retreated weakly. It knew the limit of its powers.

Hornbeck took Elphinstone in charge, clove to him closer than a brother. And Elphinstone was grateful, and settled down to work. And out of his gratitude and industry, and the inspiration which liberty afforded him, there sprang forth his first long story, "The Breath of Freedom." The book spoke for itself—it is more than enough to say of it that it still speaks; it is still remembered; it has not been forgotten. As other editors had recognized the fact that Hornbeck had discovered Elphinstone some years before as a marvel in the short-story line, so did they now doff their hats to Hornbeck, because he had revealed in Elphinstone the art of a powerful novelist.

"But that isn't the thing," Elphinstone told Hornbeck and Westervelt. "'The Breath of Freedom' isn't what I want." He tapped his head. "I've got it here—it's all chaotic, but it's there. I call it 'the idea.' I can't put it on paper yet; I can't outline it. But I *feel* it. . . ." He stopped. "Have you ever *seen* the soul of a man?" he queried. He did not wait for an answer. "I'm going to make them see it *on paper*. That's what I want to do. I'm going to do it. *That's* 'the idea.'"

"He'll do it," Hornbeck assured Westervelt. "Can't you *feel* the power of the man? He's a wonder. I suppose the varied nature of Bobbie Burns was one gigantic poem. Don't you think so? It's the way with Elphinstone. His being is nothing more nor less than one big, gigantic, throbbing *story*. He'll develop 'the idea.' And the crowd will begin to sit up, and try to think. Just wait."

They waited. "The idea" did not develop. Westervelt, who was a lawyer and not a literary man, and who had his own fish to fry, saw little of Hornbeck, and less of Elphinstone.

A year passed. One day he was startled. Hornbeck called him up. In the voice of Hornbeck was genuine anguish. "Say, Westervelt," he cried, "I've lost my man!"

"What man?"

"Your man," returned the other; "Elphinstone."

"Elphinstone!" said Westervelt. "What? Some other publisher get him away from you?"

"No," cried Hornbeck; "we don't steal one another's discoveries—not always. We're generally as decent as the lawyers. That isn't it. He's lost—dropped out of sight—slipped from the pedestal that he set up for himself. Don't you understand?"

"Thunder!" cried Westervelt. "You don't mean"

"Exactly," answered Hornbeck; "that's just what I do mean." In his tone there was a wail of helplessness; his voice sounded as a mother's sounds when she cries out, "What shall I do—what shall I do?" and wrings her hands.

There was nothing to do. Hornbeck knew it. Westervelt knew it. The thing that had claimed Elphinstone once had claimed him for its own again; it held him tight—tighter than had The Wavecrest Sanatorium. And against that thing there was no writ of right—no writ of habeas corpus. For that thing held him by his own consent.

"What shall I do?" cried Hornbeck, friend of Elphinstone. And Hornbeck cried in vain.

Westervelt swung into his office late one afternoon. In the outer room, upon a chair, there lounged an object, a form in human guise. The office-boy, with an air of one would who use tongs, nodded gingerly toward this object.

"A man to see you, Mr. Westervelt," he said.

It was Elphinstone. He was blear-eyed, stained, soiled, almost beyond recognition. He had been in the dirt; he had lain in the gutters of humanity. Upon him was the mark of the beast.

"Come in," said Westervelt. Elphinstone rose, and shambled into his private office.

Westervelt groaned. "This," he whispered to himself, "is the work of the writ of habeas corpus; it is Hornbeck's work; it is my work; it is the work of the barons who wrested a

priceless privilege from their king." He retreated to the farthest corner in his room.

"What do you want?" he queried, aloud.

Elphinstone straightened up. "I want to tell you," he began. His eyes roved about the office, and his mind seemed to rove with it. "I want to tell you. *You'll* understand. I dare not go to Hornbeck. But you'll do to tell. I—I've lost something."

"I should think you had," angrily returned Westervelt.

Elphinstone rose to his feet. "Listen," he commanded, and his voice strengthened as he went on. "Listen," he repeated. He strode forward, uncertainly, and clutched the lawyer's arm. Westervelt well remembered when last that hand clutched his.

"I've lost 'the idea,'" wailed Elphinstone. "Do you understand me? Do you know what I was dreaming of, and living for? It was 'the idea.' It was mine. I had it here. It was growing. And—I've lost it." Westervelt thought, oddly, of the wail that had been in Hornbeck's voice, that last time, over the telephone. There was the mother's wail, too, in the voice of Elphinstone. And yet . . .

"Well," he said, coldly enough, to Elphinstone.

Elphinstone thrust his hand into the air—a hand that seemed to grope about as the hand of a blind man might.

"Now," he continued, pulling himself together with an effort, "I've got to find it—somehow, don't you see?"

Westervelt did not, could not understand, that this was the soul of Elphinstone, groping through the flesh; the soul of Elphinstone crying out against the flesh.

"I've got to find it," he repeated. He stopped. Again that clutch upon the lawyer's arm. "You've got to help me find it."

Westervelt started. There was something in the man's manner that he could not fathom.

"How," he stammered, "how can I help you to find it?"

Elphinstone drew his hand across his

face. "I want to go back," he said stolidly, as though repeating a lesson that he had learned in his lucid moments, "back to The Wavecrest Sanatorium. I want to go back to—*freedom*."

"What!" cried Westervelt. And still he did not perceive the significance of it. Even Elphinstone did not know what it meant. But—it was the turning point. Elphinstone's life was beginning. Heretofore his life had been weakness. Others had immured him; others had held him in restraint, for his own good. But now, tearing its way through the desires of the flesh, the wail of his soul made itself heard.

"I want to go back to—*freedom*." The sodden creature that tottered before Westervelt was making its first stand.

"Do you mean it?" asked Westervelt.

Elphinstone nodded. Westervelt called a stenographer.

"Tell me your story," commanded Westervelt; "all there is to tell."

Elphinstone told it—the history of the case, of his hard case. Westervelt wove and fashioned it into legal shape. Westervelt called in a notary, and Elphinstone made oath.

"You'll be committed on this," Westervelt told him, "legally committed. You understand all that?"

"I understand," repeated Elphinstone dully. "I understand that I'm going to find"—again he passed his hand across his face—"that I'm going to find . . ."

"*My child.*" He had not said it; did not say it. But it was the phrase that quivered in the air, and smote the ears of Westervelt. Elphinstone had started out to find "the idea" that he had lost; that he had robbed himself of; that "idea" that was flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone; he had forgotten it; it was his child.

Westervelt understood. And Westervelt held himself unto his task. It made no difference that Elphinstone weakened, blustered, and repudiated, in the interim, all that he had done in the office of Westervelt. For on that

day the soul of Elphinstone had spoken unto Westervelt, and Westervelt would listen to no other voice.

Westervelt put him back, on his own petition, in the place from whence he had come some months before.

"He's back there, good and hard," said Westervelt to Hornbeck.

From that time on Elphinstone, writer of short stories, kept turning into Hornbeck, with regularity, the product of his pen.

"They're good—all good," Hornbeck would tell Mixley, "but there's something missing in them. Elphinstone's best work seems to have been done." He thought about Elphinstone a good deal.

"I don't know but I'll take a run and see him," he announced. He did. Elphinstone was the same man he had ever been, when at his best. The same fire was in his eye.

"What of 'the idea'?" queried the editor-in-chief.

But Elphinstone only turned his head away. He did not answer. It was a subject on which he preferred not to be heard.

Months passed. Years passed. Elphinstone still wrote; still was immured at Greenwoods, in Connecticut. Westervelt and Hornbeck were both getting old.

And suddenly, one day, Elphinstone summoned them to the Wavecrest. They went. They saw him in his room. He, too, had changed. The gray was creeping steadily into his hair. But he looked the better for it, too. He turned to Hornbeck.

"I lied to you," he said, and there was a gleam in his eye. "It was about 'the idea.' You remember. You asked me once."

Hornbeck nodded.

"*I—I found it,*" Elphinstone went on, turning to Westervelt, "the year that I came back. I have been working on it ever since."

"Ah," said Hornbeck, "that explains it. Your other work showed it."

Elphinstone smiled curiously. "Did it?" he asked. "I wondered."

"I'm going to read you this," he said to them, picking up a bulky manuscript, "parts of it, at least. It's 'the idea,' you see."

He turned to Westervelt. "This will interest Hornbeck," he smiled, "but you need not listen if it tires you."

Westervelt laughed. "Oh," he said, "I guess I can stand it. Fire ahead."

Five minutes later he had forgotten that he had said it; forgotten where he was, forgotten everything but the story, in which was sown and planted and watered the very soul of Elphinstone. It had been early when they reached there. When Elphinstone finished, the western sky was streaked with red. Hornbeck and Westervelt each dropped back against their chairs. For moments they were silent. Finally, Hornbeck smote his thigh.

"Thunderation!" he exclaimed.

Westervelt said nothing—he *felt* everything.

And what these two men felt, thousands have felt since. And out of that room where those three men sat, Hornbeck carried to the world the masterpiece that the world had waited for, "Murgatroyd, Master of Men." It was, indeed, the child of Elphinstone; flesh of his flesh, bone of his bone. It was his very soul.

"And now," he said to them, some weeks later, "I'm going out—back into the world. I have become a man. 'The idea' has made me such. It has crowded all else out. . . . I've waited a long, long while for it to come to pass. But . . . the time has come."

"Are you sure?" asked Westervelt.

Elphinstone bent upon him a burning glance.

"I know," he answered simply.

He spoke truth, indeed. For all this was some time ago. And Elphinstone, the man who holds the grip upon the hearts and souls of men, walks now as henceforth he shall ever walk, in the very middle of the straight and narrow path. He is something more than Murgatroyd, Master of Men. He is Elphinstone, master of himself.

WHEN THE GIRLS CAME OUT TO PLAY

By Dorothea Deakin

“**G**EORGIE was always a most shocking boy!” His mother beamed proudly at me over her embroidery. “I can remember the time when there wasn’t a single complete pack of cards in the house. Old Mr. Borricole used to get terribly annoyed when he dropped in to play picquet with me in the evenings. He counted only fifty-one cards in each of six new packs one night. It really was annoying when you come to think of it.”

“Yes,” said I, puzzled. “But I don’t quite see what use Georgie——”

She laughed heartily. This handsome lady has an infectious, jolly laugh, and her son inherits it.

“In every case,” said she, “it was the queen of hearts which was missing. That disgraceful boy had stolen them to send away as valentines. Six of them!”

“Well,” said I, thoughtfully, “he still carries out his young promise. I don’t know his pretty Diana very well, but she seems a young woman of strong principles. She keeps him in order even more than Anne did. Now, the Goddess Girl!” I drew a deep breath. “I could understand his feelings *there*.”

“Ah, you always had a weak spot for her. I wonder Drusilla wasn’t jealous. But Georgie says the Goddess Girl never held his heart as Diana does. She never blinded and deafened him to other people’s charms. This time I think it is more than a mere fancy. He says she’s so unexpected. He has put her on a very high pedestal indeed. He never knows if she will burst into the wildest schoolboy slang or preach to him in texts.”

“Yes,” said I, “she’s a quaint little lady. And she worships him. There’s no doubt about that.”

Georgie’s mother assumed the “Who could help it?” expression which is natural to her on these occasions. “I do wish they hadn’t had this last absurd quarrel,” she sighed. “Georgie can’t help taking a *little* notice of other girls. Really, she is most exacting, and knowing what he is, Martin, you can’t wonder that the boy is always so besieged.”

I laughed.

“I’m sorry he is in the wars again,” said I. “Send him down to Drusilla, and let *her* try her hand with him at consolation.”

The next evening he came, and when I fathomed the deep depths of gloomy despair into which he was apparently plunged I was almost sorry I had asked him. I left him as soon as possible to Drusilla, trusting to her tact and sympathy to clear away the clouds which overhung his youthful brow, but I had a short respite, for in ten minutes she called me in. Georgie was standing by the fire, his face hidden in his arms, which rested on the mantelpiece. Drusilla, in her pretty, pale gown, stood erect and excited by his side. Her blue eyes were full of tears and her cheeks flushed a vivid rose-color. Her hand rested lightly on Georgie’s coat-sleeve.

“Oh, Martin,” she said quickly, “poor Georgie is in such dreadful trouble.”

My thoughts, of course, flew to Diana.

“Ride over and make it up,” I suggested cheerfully.

He lifted his head.

"I can't," he said curtly, "now." I waited, puzzled, for him to explain. "It appears," said he, "that my mother has been investing money for the last few years under old Borricole's advice. She has not been lucky in her investments. That's all."

I stared at him.

"My mother," he flung his head back, "was perfectly right to do as she liked, of course. And she meant to make money for *me*—to double the sum my father left. Unfortunately, she went for advice to a thick-headed, antediluvian old ass, instead of consulting me."

"Do you mean to say—?" I began.

"Everything, except the estate, has gone," Drusilla broke in. "Georgie will have to earn his own living. Isn't it terrible, Martin?"

"Your mother's lawyer—" I began again. "Old Foxcroft."

"Yes," said Georgie, "Foxcroft was pretty strong in his remarks. In fact, he was not very careful about what he said to my mother. He told her she'd been behaving like a child, and I nearly kicked him down the terrace steps. Only his bald head saved him. No one shall blame my mother. It was pure unselfishness on her part. She was thinking of me all the time, but—oh, damn old Borricole!" he finished hastily.

Drusilla was not angry. She stroked his sleeve again, brimming over with sympathy.

"I beg your pardon, Drusilla, but I'm not a bit myself. It—it's rather a nasty knock for a chap, isn't it?"

"Oh, come," said I, hopefully. "Let's hope it isn't quite as black as it's painted. There must be something left, and after all, Georgie, the manor estate—"

"Good Lord!" he interrupted me, indignantly, "we sha'n't starve, if that's what you mean, and if you think I mind having to work you're jolly well mistaken. There are heaps of things a man can do that are simply ripping. Ranching, and horse-training, and mounted police, and fighting—oh, I could go out and help those jolly

little Japs like anything. It isn't that. It's Diana."

"I see." It hadn't occurred to me to think of that as a complication.

"Her father's affairs are a bit shaky, don't you see? He was looking to me to restore the fallen fortunes of the ancient house, to give his prehistoric name a leg up, and all that sort of thing, don't you know. He'll never let me have Di now, and even if he did, how could I go to her when we've quarreled and ask to be taken back—penniless? 'Please, will you forgive me? I've lost my money.' Not much."

Drusilla rubbed her eyes.

"Oh," said she, "you don't know what love is, Georgie. Money is nothing, nothing compared with love. If she loves you, she'll be *glad* to have you back and glad to help you to bear your troubles. She'll be glad you've lost your money to have the chance of showing you that she loves you for yourself alone. You don't understand how a nice girl feels, the least little bit."

Georgie played with a Chelsea cup and saucer and said nothing.

"Yes," said I consolingly, "unless her father puts his foot down and—"

"That's just it," said poor Georgie quietly. "And it's the devil of a foot when he does. Diana told me once that the fifth commandment was the most beautiful thing in the whole prayer-book. She's been very well brought up. Her father sings psalms to wipe out his disreputable past, and drown his losses on the races, and Diana would rather die than disobey either her father or her mother. I sha'n't go near her again. The less I see of her now, the better for both of us."

"If she loves you," Drusilla persisted, "she won't let you give her up."

Georgie sighed.

"You're very sweet, Drusie," he said, with a whole-hearted forgetfulness of the past. "You're as true as steel yourself, and so you think every other woman's the same. But they aren't, and even in the best of them there's something they put before love. Diana's principles come first, and always

will. And," he added loyally, "I'm not sure that I don't admire her for it. I reverence Diana even more than I love her."

"Ah," said Drusilla quietly, "Diana's only a woman, Georgie, and in spite of principles you never *quite* know what a woman will do. Besides, don't you think you will be rather cruel to keep away from her without giving her an opportunity? Oh, my dear boy, don't break her poor little heart for the sake of your own silly pride."

But Georgie threw back his shoulders and set his teeth in his admirable British way.

"Thank you, Drusie," he said; "you mean well, but you don't quite understand. There are some things a decent chap can't do. This is one of 'em."

Drusilla grew crimson, but she kept back the torrent of words on her tongue's end, and let the matter rest where it was.

"He would never see my point of view," she said sadly to me afterward. "He would spoil a girl's life with a light heart for the sake of his precious self-respect. It isn't self-respect. It's fear of what people will say."

"Drusilla," replied I thoughtfully, "isn't all this fuss a bit unnecessary? Even if Georgie and his mother have nothing else, the estate will bring them in fifteen hundred a year or so. That's three times as much as *we* have to live on. Yet you both talk as if the workhouse was waiting with open arms for them."

"Ye-es." She looked doubtful. "But they will have to give up their horses and things. Georgie says if his mother keeps even a pony-cart he will have to sell the Scarlet Runner, and he *means* her to keep one. He hates selfishness, and she'll never be able to economize, Martin. She's a darling, but she never could see the point of being careful in little things. She's nearly as extravagant as she's generous. Can you imagine her riding in a tram to save a cab fare, or going to town second-class? I don't know what's to become of them now."

"The poor lady must be very much upset," said I thoughtfully.

"Oh, of course—what a brute I am!" Drusilla jumped up. We were sitting at breakfast the morning after Georgie's revelation.

"I'll run up and see her at once," cried she. "She's been perfectly sweet to me always. I only hope there's something I can do for her now. It's terrible to see people unhappy, unless you can do things for them at once."

She didn't come back till long after luncheon, and I met her at the gate. Her face was pale, and I could see that she had been crying. Drusilla's sympathetic heart will wear her out some time, I feel assured.

"Well?" I asked.

"Oh, Martin—that poor thing——"

"Does she take it so much to heart?" I asked gently. "She feels, of course, that she has done Georgie an injury. Well—I am not surprised at that."

Drusilla looked surprised. "I am not talking about Georgie's *mother*," she said. "She's as jolly as anything. It's Diana."

"Diana?"

"Yes. Georgie's mother wrote to her last night and confessed what she had done, and the child rushed off at once. Ingraham is an awful place to get out of, and I am afraid she is the kind of poor little thing who misses trains or gets into wrong ones. She was three hours on the way. I was sitting with Georgie's mother when she rushed in, and her face was ghastly."

"Well?"

Drusilla rubbed her eyes.

"I wanted to go away, but they wouldn't let me. Diana flung her arms around both our necks and burst out crying. She said that she would never have spoken to Georgie as she did if she had known he was in trouble, and that she had disobeyed her father now in coming to see him."

"Ah!" said I thoughtfully.

"Yes, indeed," Drusilla went on with a rush. "I was quite right, and so was Georgie. She came to tell them that she loves him with all her heart, and forgave him for everything

he had ever done. She wanted to tell him herself that her parents said she was to give him up. You see, Martin, the poor child has another admirer, an affluent neighbor of theirs, and now, of course, an infinitely better match."

"Poor Georgie!" said I. "What did *he* say?"

"Oh!" Drusilla stamped her foot. "I've no patience with Georgie. He stood there as sulky as an owl, and said nothing. He didn't even take her to the station, but let the coachman do it in a dog-cart. When she had gone, he cried. He didn't seem to mind my being there, but I wish he had done it before Diana. It would have been kinder. His mother cried, too, for sympathy. *I* was crying all the time. Oh, we *have* had a happy afternoon. Georgie's mother doesn't seem to mind the money being gone, but she was dreadfully upset when Georgie said he was going to earn his own living. How funny people are!"

"Perhaps a little, honest hard work will do our precious boy a power of good," said I hopefully. "Who knows but it might be the making of him?"

Drusilla sighed.

"I rather like the way Georgie's made," she murmured. "But perhaps you are right."

"Of course, I'm right," said I.

We are told that adversity shows up our friends in their true colors, and certainly Georgie's disasters bore strange fruit.

It was while I was very busy with the last proofs of my "The Lost Columbine" that my sister-in-law came into my study for a strictly private interview, and I studied her agitated face with much surprise. I was at a loss to understand such a radiant excitement in Anne. We still disliked each other considerably.

She sat down in the chair opposite to me and leaned her elbows on my table.

"Martin," she began in her quiet voice, "I want you to help me in something. I know you don't like me, and perhaps you don't quite understand

me, but you are the only person I can come to *now*."

I was very much surprised.

"My dear girl," said I, with an effort to be affectionate and polite, "I shall be delighted to do anything for you, of course. But what can I do?"

She played nervously with an inky ruler.

"A long time ago," she said, "when I was first engaged to Georgie, you kindly and candidly showed me that I was going to spoil his life. You brought poor Mr. Muggeridge here to divert my affections, and free poor Georgie from my snares. It was partly your fault that Georgie broke off from me under a misconception, wasn't it? But perhaps you have forgotten."

I was conscious of a sudden reddening, and moved uncomfortably in my chair. It was not like peaceable Anne to begin such an unpleasant discussion.

"I suppose," she went on softly, "that you were surprised when I refused your friend. I don't think you quite realized that I happened, unfortunately for myself, to be *friend* of Georgie."

I was silent; perhaps a little ashamed into the bargain.

"When Mr. Muggeridge died, and I found he'd left me all that money," she went on, "I was surprised. But I was very glad, of course, because I'm tired of being poor. One does get tired of it. The pleasure of being careful always about very little things palls in time, don't you find? Now, *Georgie* is poor, and Diana Leigh has thrown him over, and I believe—I'm almost certain, Martin, that he—that he likes me still."

"What! Georgie?" I asked in amazed and unflattering disbelief.

"You are cruel." Her tone almost moved me to pity. "He was in love with Diana, but he has been in love with other girls, hasn't he, and he always gets over *that*, doesn't he? Don't you think, Martin, that the quiet, steady affection which comes from sympathy, and friendship, and understanding, is a better thing to build a home and one's happiness on, than these wild, short-love fancies of Georgie's?"

Still I had no response ready. My feelings of compassion grew stronger.

"I am rich, Martin. I've more money than poor Georgie has lost. And I can't tell him. I thought—Georgie always comes to you for advice, doesn't he? I thought perhaps when he did come, you might point out to him—point out to him—"

Her steady voice faltered.

"Yes?" said I gravely.

"That it might be the wisest thing he could do for his mother's sake and his own. Martin"—her earnest voice touched me—"we all love Georgie. Everybody does. He is so young and kind and strong. He is a kind of Prince Charming, you see, and one can't help wanting him to be happy. I used to lecture him, and try to influence his mind, but I don't want to do any stupid thing like that, now. I only want—" She stopped with a choking sound.

This from Anne!

"I will put the case to Georgie," said I gently, and held out my hand to her across the table, "very strongly." Perhaps it was not quite the first time that I had felt my old opinion of her shaken, but it was the first time I had wanted to help her to her ends. Anne's brown eyes were not calculating now; they were wet.

"Thank you, Martin." She said no more and presently she left me. That very night I went to find Georgie, to give my advice with the utmost diplomacy and tact. But I might have saved the breath I spent on it.

"Thank you," said Georgie loftily. "It's the kind of a thing a man doesn't do. I broke off with Anne when she was poor and I was rich. I'm not going back to whine at her feet now the tables are turned. Besides, I don't approve of her ways. You know what I told you of Peterkin? It's any means to any end, with Anne."

"Suppose she is still fond of you?" I ventured mildly.

"She'll have to get over it then. It's time she did. Hang it all, Martin, a chap can't marry all the girls who're

fond of him. It isn't allowed in a Christian country."

The conceited brutality of this was too much for me, and I went away. Of course I didn't betray Anne to *him*, but I told Drusilla. She received my news with a sigh.

"Poor Anne," she said; "of course she loves him. You never understood that, but I *knew*. And of course Georgie won't hear of her now. Do you know"—she blushed a little—"I don't believe Georgie ever really cared for any of these girls in the right way."

"You think he was driven to propose to them all in the last recklessness of despair when he lost you?" I asked gravely, knowing very well that this was exactly what she did think.

She leaned over her boy, sleepy and rosy in his crib, and carefully covered an out-flung arm.

"Matthew Arnold," she said, "when you're a man you'll pay your daddy out for all these jeers at your sainted mammy, won't you?"

Until "The Lost Columbine" was off my hands I saw little of Georgie, and although I didn't mean to be selfish I am afraid I thought still less of him. But he rooted me out one evening, and I saw by his face that something fresh had happened. His expression was one of triumphant and resigned misery. His mouth was firm. There was a wonderful amount of strength in Georgie's mouth in spite of its girlish size and shape.

"I have had a letter from Diana," said he. "You can read it if you like."

"If you are to give each other up," said I slowly, "wouldn't it be better for both of you if there were no letters?"

He handed it to me.

"I should like you to read it," said he. "Then you can see just what I am giving up."

"But—is it fair to *her*?"

"See what you think of it!" curtly.

MY DEAR, DEAR BOY: If I am to honor my parents I must obey them and give you up. There would be no blessing from above on the disobedient act of an undutiful child, and I must tread the thorny path alone

and bear my sorrow as a holy cross. (Here there was a blot and a large splash. A tear?) I've been thinking it over and it seems to me that love is the most holy thing of all, and rather than be cruel and mercenary and break your heart, I think—oh, Georgie, I'll cut the whole show and do anything you ask me to do. Write to me, Georgie—I *want* to do my Christian duty, but perhaps if I owe a duty to you I may be forgiven as well.

Your heart-broken, and always true,

DIANA.

I was very much touched, but I smiled in spite of it. Her letter was so very like her conversation. Also, it bore out Drusilla's prophecy.

"Poor little girl!" murmured I. "What are you going to say to her, Georgie? Shall you encourage her to cut the show?"

He lifted his head and met my gaze with clear, stern blue eyes.

"Can't you see?" said he.

"See what?"

"I worshiped that girl for her goodness, and now she's ready to chuck her principles and obedience, and everything else she thinks sacred, to the winds. She'd bolt with me tomorrow if I whistled to her. She isn't a bit better than anybody else when she wants a thing badly. When I think of the way she used to preach about honor! Ugh!"

"Georgie!"

"Yes," said Georgie. "I'm sorry for her, but I'm disappointed in her, too, and I shall show her that a man's idea of honor isn't a woman's. I wrote her a kind, unselfish letter. I put myself entirely on one side. I told her that she must forget me at once, and that I should never be quite easy in my mind until I saw her happily married to someone else. I told her she must put me out of her thoughts altogether if she wanted me to be happy. I don't mean to spoil her life. I'm not a selfish beast."

"And so that's your idea of an unselfish letter, is it?" said I slowly. "I suppose it will cheer her up immensely!"

He looked puzzled, and I hastily went on:

"She will have to get over it, I sup-

pose—like Anne. As you say, Georgie, you can't marry all these girls, and perhaps—"

"Who the devil's that?" Georgie, facing my study window, broke out with an amazed stare. Something in bright and beautiful Summer colors had drifted past, framed for one brief second against the green of the beech trees.

Voices in the hall. Not Drusilla's; for she of course was out with Matthew Arnold. A tap at my study door—then someone flung it widely open to disclose a radiant vision; softly rustling, delicately and faintly perfumed, and gowned in exquisite primrose color, her glowing, charming face dazzling us from a wonderful white hat, tied with fresh filmy strings under her delightful chin! Of all people in the world, the Goddess Girl!

"Oh, Georgie!" she cried, with a fresh ripple of a laugh, "I've come back!"

I was not there apparently.

Georgie stood hesitating, flushing, and—could it be?—annoyed.

"Oh, is it all true?" asked the Goddess Girl delightfully. "Do tell!"

"Is what true?" he asked sternly.

She came further into the room and laid her useless and expensive parasol on a chair.

"Say, Georgie," murmured she, "have you really run away from the little Leigh gurl?"

"I'm afraid I don't quite understand you." The blood mounted quickly to his forehead.

"Why, I heard there was a little rift in the psalm-singing lute," said she. "Is that true, Georgie? Are you free?"

"My engagement to Miss Leigh is at an end," said Georgie impressively, "though I fail to see—"

The eyes of the Goddess Girl lit up and she held out her pretty hand to him.

"My, Georgie!" she said, "I'm afraid you're a verry disgraceful boy. I guess you lick creation, with these rapid engagements of yours. I heard that you'd lost your money. Is that true, too? Do tell."

"That's true, too," said Georgie.

She laughed.

"Then I guess I'll have to ask you to see me home," with a sly and most bewitching smile.

Georgie flushed. "I am afraid I must beg of you to excuse me," he answered firmly. I don't know how he could.

Phillida gave a little gasp—then laughed nervously. Obviously she saw that this was no moment for maidenly reticence.

"I guess I'll have to take you back myself," said she quickly. "I guess you'll have to help me to spend all those dollars. There's too much for one bit of a gurl to spend. And I do my vurry best."

I regarded the Summery delicacy of her lovely gown, and felt that here she did indeed speak the truth. But Georgie edged away from her toward the window.

"It's very noble of you," he said hurriedly, "and all that sort of thing, but it's quite impossible. I couldn't marry a rich girl now."

The Goddess Girl's sapphire eyes blazed with horror and bewilderment. I was not surprised—but then neither did Georgie's attitude surprise me.

"You see," said he, "I can't marry now at all. And I'm very sorry, Phillida, but you did give me up yourself, didn't you? I am sure if you think it over calmly, you'll find that you still like the Yankee kind of husband best."

Phillida collapsed suddenly in a chair, and I could see her lips tremble. I tried to slip out of the room, but Georgie stopped me with a quick gesture of appeal.

"I guess I'd better make tracks," said the poor Goddess Girl with limp despair.

"Yes," said Georgie grimly, "and thank you very much for your—kind charity."

She rose without a word and left the room. I followed her meekly, and at the hall door she turned her charming face to me, with pleading eyes—eyes as full of tears as Anne's had been, and oh, so much more beautiful!

"Say," she whispered with a sob, "you're his friend. I guess you can see that Georgie's throwing away a real good thing?"

"I can, indeed," said I with heartfelt fervor; but she passed this by.

"Georgie doesn't know the first thing about real love," she said. "He cayn't see why I came back. I just worship that boy. I guess he's tired of his little Puritan by now. And I cayn't do without him. I've never had to do without anything before, and it hurts some. The thought of fever sent me crazy that day I went away, but I felt meaner'n two cents when I cooled down and saw what a fool I'd been. I guess I've spoiled my eyes for good crying over Georgie ever since."

I was silent, and she laid her hand on my coat-sleeve.

"If you and your little peach of a wife talk to him nicely," said she, "he might be taught to see what he's throwing away. Won't you please open his eyes for him? I'm going 'way back to his mother right now."

"I assure you," said I earnestly, "that I will do my very best for you; but Georgie's a bit of a mule, you know. He has an unnatural tendency to go strongly in the opposite direction at times."

"That's so," said she dejectedly. "Then I guess you'd better go to him and blacken my character considerable."

We parted; she to float sadly and gracefully down the garden path, I, back to Georgie.

"Georgie," said I, with my usual diplomacy, "it was a forward thing for that girl to do."

Georgie laughed bitterly.

"Gone off a bit in her looks, do you think?" I asked cautiously.

"Rot!" said Georgie.

"Seriously," said I, "she's a Goddess Girl, and she loves you, Georgie."

"Oh, shut up!" said he rudely.

"You might do worse than think it over," I murmured mildly.

He flung himself into a chair and scattered my papers with his manly elbows.

"These women will drive me mad," said he.

"Take a reasonable view of the thing," said I. "Make a judicious choice. Sit on your silly pride. If you love a girl you won't mind being called a fortune-hunter——"

"I don't love any of 'em enough for that," cried he with some force. "It's getting a bit too sultry for me, Martin. How'd you like it if all the girls you knew came back crying over you, and forgiving you all your sins, because you'd lost something? Oh, these women! When a chap's a bit worried with something really important, they all come and chuck themselves at his head. As if you could fight the world any better with a silly woman hanging round your neck. Blithering, sentimental rot!"

"Upon my word!" His sentiments appalled me.

"Yes," said he firmly. "I've done with girls."

And for the present I really think he has, for a few days ago I had a letter from him, post-marked Lisbon and written from the Royal mail steamer *Danube*. Here it is:

DEAR MARTIN: I am going out to the Argentine, ranching, and may come in for a revolution with a bit of luck. No one knows yet but my mother, and she quite sees with me that it's the only decent, manly kind of life for a chap who isn't in the Army. She's coming out with me, later on, she says, to make butter and cheese and things. There's no one like my mother when it comes to real, practical good sense.

I was sorry not to say good-bye to Drusie and the little chap, but I felt it better to keep my plans quite dark till we got safely out of the river.

Good-bye, old boy. Thanks for all your good advice. I don't believe I ever took any of it, and perhaps it's as well, but you'll wish me luck, won't you?

Always yours,

GEORGE.

P. S. You might slip round and break it to the girls.



A CHRISTENING ROBE

By Mabel Earle

WHO knows what hopes she sewed within the seam,
Linking the folds she fashioned, snow on snow,
With the white patience of a voiceless dream
Hid in her heart, a hundred years ago?

Who knows what prayers she 'broidered in the flowers
Flung on the fair, white linen, throat to hem,
The litanies of holy, silent hours
Twined in the tracery of leaf and stem?

Who knows if she looked down from paradise,
When alien hands her little son had dressed
In the wee robe she wrought—and hid her eyes
To see him smiling on a stranger's breast?

A MATTER OF HABIT

By Ludwig Lewisohn

INNISFELLEN regarded his cousin with amused curiosity. She was so evidently preparing the way, with deliberate art, for some startling, and, to her, delightful communication. The intenseness of her life, the vividness of her interests, offered so pleasant a contrast to his own habitual calm—the watchful calm of a man to whom the gaining of subtle and correct impressions is the chief business of life. She smoothed a stray tress from her forehead and folded her hands in her lap with an air of finality.

"He has consented to come," she announced.

Innisfellen opened his eyes.

"And who is this person so notable that we can dispense with his name?"

"Horatio Delabarre!" Mrs. Brice was radiant. "I have told you before of his extreme reluctance to appear at any social gathering. He is anxious to give those who interest him only of his best, and to husband all his nervous energy for such finer and completer intercourse. But he has consented to come to my next Wednesday evening." A little sigh of satisfaction escaped her.

"So that one is at last to catch a glimpse of this rare bird of yours?"

"All men," Mrs. Brice remarked demurely, "seem afflicted with an ungenerous antagonism toward any of their fellows in whom a woman shows the least interest."

"True!" Innisfellen laughed, "but hardly novel. You must admit, though, Dolly," and his face grew graver, "that there are definite elements of annoyance in this case. You pick up this fellow, no one knows where, and rave, yes, positively rave about him."

60

Mrs. Brice blushed slightly, and raised her hands in angry protest.

"Not vulgarly, nor even very obviously, I admit," he hastened to add; "but as nearly as it is possible for you to do."

"He is very wonderful," she said softly.

Innisfellen frowned. His cousin had lately used certain phrases with a peculiar softness of caressing intonation, and had adopted certain faint but exotic mannerisms that had once been entirely foreign to the sincerity which was her chief charm. In these phrases and mannerisms he divined the influence of an alien personality—that of Delabarre. This influence, which seemed to warp his cousin's temperament, and to render her artificial and disingenuous, he resented bitterly. To express this resentment, which, examined in the crude light of day and common sense, seemed to rest on foundations so absurdly flimsy, and to express it with politic delicacy—such was, at the moment, his most insistent problem. But he had the smallest measure of conversational adroitness, and habit had rendered him frank to Mrs. Brice.

"He may be wonderful, Dolly, as you say, and you may call me prejudiced, or anything you please. But, though I've never seen the man, I feel there's something wrong about him—something that puzzles me. Through his influence over you there seems to come to me a strange exhalation as of rich but unhealthy perfumes. Am I talking nonsense?" He laughed at his own warmth.

"Yes, and no," she said slowly.

"You have expressed his strangeness but not its quality. That is beyond expression. But you will feel it. Perhaps I can persuade him to sit to you. If you can truly paint him, paint the atmosphere of his personality, the secret of his charm—you will produce your masterpiece."

"Very well," Innisfellen assented; "but as your friend and kinsman I have the right to say this much more: you know extremely little about the man, his antecedents, or even his occupation. Guard yourself against undue intimacy. He may not even be a gentleman. Oh, yes," he anticipated her protest, "the definition is crude enough, but not, believe me, so bad to work with."

Mrs. Brice laughed derisively.

"If you knew him, Jack, you would laugh with me. The idea of anyone questioning Mr. Delabarre's being a gentleman would seem as amusing to you as it does to me. If all the kings and emperors of the whole earth"—again he detected that soft and strange elaborateness of intonation—"were gathered with all the splendor of their immemorial insignia upon them, and Horatio Delabarre entered that august convention—it would still be he who condescended, not they."

"He told you to say that!" Innisfellen cried with extreme annoyance.

"Perhaps," said Mrs. Brice enigmatically. "At all events, you will see him the day after tomorrow."

"I shall certainly not miss the chance," her cousin answered.

He walked through the crisp air to his studio more perturbed in spirit than he would own even to himself. This was the result of his delay and his love of ease. An exotic adventurer, a clever scoundrel, so he told himself, would snatch Dolly away, absorb her money, and break her heart. That, he reasoned, would be the inevitable result of the present situation, and yet upon what ground could he possibly interfere? Dolly's voice, forced to a mysterious gorgeousness of tone and phrasing, murmured in his ears, and the keen sense of his own helplessness

to mend matters overwhelmed him. He sat in his studio, powerless to work, and smoked cigarette after cigarette. Yes, he would paint the man, if possible, and gaze into that strange and alien soul. He would bring out on canvas, ruthlessly and without reserve, the extreme turpitude, which, he was willing to swear, lurked at the source of Delabarre's enchantments. Dolly would see and believe.

Comforted by this reassuring vision, Innisfellen regained his wonted calm. He almost believed, after a sound night's sleep, that his fears of the previous evening had been morbidly exaggerated. He determined to be sanely watchful. The somewhat acute anticipation with which he looked forward to Wednesday evening was not unpleasant, even at such moments when his sense of humor supervened, and he called himself a fool for the expectant beating of his own heart.

II

MRS. BRICE had her curiously different misgivings. Out of the fulness of her fascinated soul she had, almost involuntarily, spread the news of Delabarre's finally appearing in her drawing-room, and had spread it with nervous eagerness. Votary at so special a shrine, she wondered whether her friends would at once comprehend the full justification of her zeal. That it was fully justified she never doubted, never even formulated the possibility of such a doubt. The chance of other people's blindness alone appalled her. She was, to be sure, morbidly willing to suffer for his sake, to abase herself before him, but she would have preferred a method that would leave him untouched. Should his debut miss fire, a part of the unpleasantness must rest upon him, and that anything in the universe should dare to ruffle his calm—if, indeed, it could be ruffled—that seemed to her the supreme injustice.

She superintended the decoration of her house, feverishly anxious to elimi-

nate any note of color or design that might conceivably offend his immense fastidiousness. She feared his displeasure above all things. Had he granted her the intimacy of his anger, she would have been happy beyond words. But the very thought of his indulgent smile, so abysmally weary, though with a high and tragic weariness, brought the pallor to her face. She abandoned her task late on Tuesday night, not because she was satisfied, but because she felt that she had expended all the intelligence, taste and delicacy of which she was possessed. From now on her chief anxiety was lest anything should prevent his coming.

On Wednesday this anxiety gathered force. Delabarre had not promised to come; he refused, at all times, to make a definite promise. So that every distant ring of the outer door-bell made Mrs. Brice's heart contract with the fear that some fatal message should arrive. She desired his presence so poignantly, not only because she had promised it to others, but because it would indicate his willingness to make an effort for her sake. He rarely granted favors and never demanded them. Her subtlest attempts to please him produced merely a smile of weary comprehension. Devices so exquisitely delicate and guarded that another man would never have suspected her consciousness of them, became crude and pitifully obvious in the light of his unerring knowledge. And then he smiled. Still, Mrs. Brice told herself, he had continued to come, had found pleasure and solace in her society, and for a deeper feeling on his part she was willing to wait and fight and suffer. That he had assented to place a seal of mild publicity upon their friendship—that, in itself, was something.

She dressed herself with infinite care. No easy victory was possible here, nor did she hope for it. But the sight, in a tall mirror, of her exquisite and radiant personality, reassured her. After all, could any man be entirely unmoved by her? Often as her inferences from other men applied to

him had failed, she continued to make them. No other method was possible.

Her guests began to arrive early, and all shared in a vague air of expectancy. She nerved herself to receive them without betraying the fact that her heart fluttered with an acute pain. But very gradually the atmosphere of expectancy gave way to one of noticeable languor or even boredom. The attraction of the evening had failed to appear. Mrs. Brice quivered with disappointment, and felt upon her Innisfellen's half-compassionate and half-disdainful glance. She was nearing the limit of her endurance; she knew that she could not repress the tears for many minutes longer when a last guest was announced.

It was Mr. Delabarre. Mrs. Brice's flush of relief and gladness, the flame that leapt up instantly in her eyes, were strident to the least discerning. A silence fell upon the room and Delabarre made his way to his hostess, past rows of acutely watchful eyes. He seemed entirely unconscious of their attention. His large and lustrous personality progressed with an imperial stateliness of measured grace. Lightly he touched Mrs. Brice's outstretched hands and remained for a few minutes speaking to her alone.

In the resurgent hum of conversation Innisfellen set himself the task of observing Delabarre dispassionately. It was a task, as he knew, of almost insuperable difficulty. He had promised himself a satisfying disappointment, had assured himself that his cousin was the dupe of a clever poseur, and he was conquered and humiliated. Delabarre was dazzling—dazzling despite his comparative corpulence, his obvious middle age, the gleams of gray in the long curves of his hair. No words, Innisfellen at once admitted to himself, were adequate here. Language was too coarse and blundering. Whatever soul that lustrous form harbored, its immense impressiveness was undeniable. Thus might have looked, thus might have borne itself the reincarnation of one who in an immeasurable antiquity had

read and ruled the hearts of men, pontiff at once and emperor, and had consciously carried with him from immemorial age to age the burden of his unerring knowledge.

Innisfellen noted the summons in Mrs. Brice's glance and went across the room. The banality of a formal introduction to the object of his thought appalled him. Delabarre bowed silently, but Mrs. Brice was unsparing.

"I want you two to know each other. Mr. Delabarre, you must have seen my cousin's work?"

Delabarre smiled, and his full lips disclosed a narrow line of brilliant white.

"I know it well."

Innisfellen at once recognized in his voice the original of Mrs. Brice's velvety intonations. The man's voice sounded like an echo of far, sonorous music.

"You are enviable," Delabarre continued, "in that you have the courage to create."

"Courage is plentiful enough," Innisfellen returned, puzzled, "if only power were not so rare."

"You misunderstand," said Delabarre with exquisite but unmistakable indulgence. "The tyro is neither fastidious nor conscious of the immense futility of our highest efforts. It is the man of power who deserves praise for creating at all."

Before Innisfellen could reply other guests were eagerly pleading for an introduction. As for him, he was crushed by Delabarre's generosity and liberal charm. He had not abandoned his suspicions, and would not, but he was momentarily conquered and humiliated.

He left the house soon thereafter, followed presently by the others. Delabarre yielded wearily to Mrs. Brice's mute appeal, and remained. She led him upstairs to her boudoir and drew an arm-chair for him to the fire. For herself she took a low stool and sat near him.

"It was a beautiful success," she said.

Into Delabarre's dark eyes crept a

look of impersonal sadness. His voice had in it a wistful music.

"The strongest soul does not learn to abandon a pleasure without regret. Rigidly as I have schooled myself, that weakness remains. No, you do not understand. Is it worth while to explain? I am afraid, my dear lady, that our friendship has now, like the majority of human relations, received the stamp of publicity, and hence of vulgarity. You did not find my interest in you a sufficient good; not until you had made of it a public show were you content. I might have, in truth, did foresee it, and yet—I am sorry."

The infinite, plangent pathos of his tone brought stinging tears into her eyes.

"You need not have consented to come!"

"But you desired it."

"You are not always given to such easy compliance!"

"Dear child," said Delabarre, and, for the shadow of a moment, touched her hair, "be calm. Man fighting against the inevitable is a grotesquely and pitifully comic harlequin. I have long lost my taste for that rôle. At that moment when the desire to exhibit me to your friends first arose in your soul, the exquisiteness of our relation died. Resistance on my part would have changed nothing. Dead things do not arise. Why were you not content with the consciousness, secret and beautiful, of our intimacy? I carried that consciousness about with me as a rare and precious gift, and now the surging sea of banality rolls over it."

A sickness of the heart, almost like a physical nausea, swept through her. By her own folly she had lost the thing dearest to her in all the world. Her throat ached so intolerably that she could scarcely speak. But the abandonment of despair was upon her.

"Is this a final parting?" she asked.

"Oh, no," Delabarre returned wearily. "Why should we be violent. Why should you distort your face into a mask of grief? Grief is ugly, and

gladness is not beautiful. Something has passed beyond recall from our friendship. But we may still know each other—at times."

Voluntarily she misunderstood him, deceived herself, and nursed, for that moment, a faint flame of hope.

III

It took Innisfellen some days to clarify his mind and readjust its processes. He had long ceased to expect mysteries in human form, and resented their appearance. But such a mystery now confronted him, and upon terms peculiarly trying. It required all he had of mental courage and self-restraint to set about finding an impartial solution. His solicitude for his cousin threatened to blind him. For a method of approach to his riddle he fell back upon the plan suggested by her and asked Delabarre to sit to him. He received a reply assenting graciously but with a hint of prospective boredom, and the day and hour of the first sitting were agreed upon.

Delabarre appeared punctually at the studio, bringing with him a faint scent of costly perfumes. He noted Innisfellen's few treasures with immediate appreciation.

"I, too, collected once," he said dreamily.

Innisfellen looked up.

"Not bronzes, or furniture, or china—but souls. I sought the rare aroma of the spirit or its strange deformity. Often it seemed to me that I had found them, but a more searching glance revealed—emptiness."

It seemed to Innisfellen that in this speech the note of the charlatan was clearly struck.

"And so you have ceased from your efforts?" he asked.

"Not entirely, to my own shame be it said," Delabarre replied, "though now my search is carried on without hope. Were it more easily possible to probe the souls of men some strange and hidden splendors might yet be found. But since it is only by arousing

the passions that we can see a naked soul, our researches are usually limited to the other sex. And the fundamental monotony of women is appalling."

Innisfellen's powers of analysis were presently in abeyance as he became absorbed in his work. Yet he was keenly aware of the fact that that work was void of any controlling motive. The man before him was neither classifiable nor had he yielded any hint of his secret. That dark and lustrous figure—for to the latter epithet Innisfellen inevitably reverted—would stand out against a background of deep, almost somber crimson. Something of its imperial grace he would convey, of its detached dignity. But all else was vague, and at the end of the first sitting very little had been done. Delabarre did not, like so many sitters, ask to see the first faint gropings of the painter; indeed, he seemed but slightly interested in the whole proceeding, and departed in silence.

The agony of his problem overtook Innisfellen. If those words of colossal disillusion were sincere, here was, in truth, a task for the artist. And to connect the idea of insincerity with Delabarre was, after all, difficult. His manner, but for certain spontaneous and characteristic gestures, was simple, and of a natural though stately grace; and he was, of course, far too discerning to think that his personality needed any meretricious aids. But a pervading atmosphere of imperious beauty was all he offered to the painter's eye. No single feature was a preponderant saliency. His eyes alone—the eyes of a god in exile—seemed to afford a starting point, but even their suggestions were often obscured by an impalpable veil.

At the end of two months the picture was still a blur, and Innisfellen's usually strong nerves felt the strain. Above their jangle arose, one day, Delabarre's musical voice with extraordinarily compelling richness, and Innisfellen ceased working.

"Do you know why I consented to sit to you? I was curious to know

whether a soul that has laid aside desire and regret like worn-out garments could be held captive upon canvas. Your failure is interesting. You have sought a secret in me, some salient affection of the soul, some central pivot of existence, some hint—I have no secret but a great weariness. I have looked deep, deep into the eyes of life, and at the bottom of those apparently unfathomable wells there lurks—nothing."

Innisfellen arose and paced the length of the studio in supreme irritation.

"It is my own incompetence," he cried. "There is no human soul that cannot be interpreted on canvas."

Delabarre smiled his smile of im-memorial wisdom.

"My dear friend," he said, "if the soul were surely an entity, yes. But of that bundle of desires and dreams which we call soul, I have laid aside so many that, perhaps, I have lost my soul." His voice seemed to come from an immeasurable distance.

Innisfellen stopped and gazed, fascinated, into the other's strangely smiling eyes.

"Is that possible?"

"Perhaps," said Delabarre. "At all events, the result of the experiment is clear. You must draw your own inferences."

To Innisfellen, left alone in his studio to brood, this explanation of his failure seemed hopelessly absurd, and, in retrospect, he seemed, indeed, to detect in Delabarre's softly deliberate tone a note of irony. For all that ideas came to him of a strangeness such as his firm sanity was never wont to harbor, monstrous illusions of the antique world stirred in his blood, abominable superstitions: all these, as he contemptuously told himself, caused by a portly gentleman in a frock coat who professed to have conquered the secrets of life and to have reaped a reward of weariness and disillusion. But there was the canvas with its horribly incompetent travesty upon its subject—his failure not only as a painter but as a man of insight. He was roused by a

July 1906—5

nervous rap on the door, and Mrs. Brice entered.

"Is he here?"

"He went an hour ago."

"It was a very short sitting, then?"

"Yes. And the last."

"I had something to tell him," she faltered helplessly, "and I thought that I might find him here. He has been very busy recently and I have seen but little of him."

Her smile was pitiful upon her white, despairing face, and her eyes had the hard brightness of fever.

Innisfellen grasped both her hands. "Dolly, Dolly, don't break your heart on a heart of stone! There's something dead in him and that makes him terrible. Look, I couldn't paint—a dead soul!"

She clung to his grasp like a frightened child.

"He has lost his capacity to feel. He could not love you if he would. I seem to see it all now."

"It's impossible!" she sobbed.

"It is true, dear," Innisfellen said, more calmly. "A madness has come upon you, but you have always the refuge of my love."

"Never!" she cried. "Do you suppose that anyone who has lived on air and fire can . . . Oh, Jack, I didn't mean to hurt you. Forgive me, Jack!"

"There is nothing to forgive," he said gravely, "but you must promise me one thing. When you have quite proved the truth of what I have said, promise that you will try to let me help you."

"I promise," she almost whispered, and hurried away as though she had exposed her heart against her will.

But she had not the courage to go back to her empty house and the interminable hours of waiting for one who never came. Her failure to meet Delabarre at her cousin's studio seemed to create a climacteric moment in the agony of her soul. And Innisfellen's words had seared her. For in her deepest consciousness lay, as she had long known, the suspicion that she was indeed dashing herself against a pitiless rock, and that her struggle and her

wounds were vain. And so wholly had she centered her life upon Delabarre, and had so completely transformed her nature at the breath of his silent bidding, that his loss meant to her fevered imagination inevitable death. Her whole being rose up in arms against the thought of living without him. But it was all madness, madness, this idea of a man who could not love. She would prove that it was madness, defy Innis-fellen, and laugh at her own monstrous fears. She ordered the carriage to turn and drove to Delabarre's apartment.

There was neither surprise nor gladness in his reception of her. In one swift glance she took in the somber beauty of his rooms, with their slightly exotic decorations. But now that she was here words failed her.

"You must have thought that I had forgotten you, dear lady," Delabarre said, "but it is not so. I have had many demands upon my time, and one cannot quite escape the turmoil of life. It would have been difficult to come to you."

"And yet you might have come."

"Conceivably, but since I did not, should you wish it? Would you have me come unless I really desired it?"

"So you did not desire!"

"How crude your mental processes are, dear child! I venture a distinction, and you fling a supposed fact at me. Facts are so very tiresome and so completely void of significance."

She clenched her hands. "When one is fighting for one's life one does not care for distinctions. Don't pretend to misunderstand me!"

A look of blended interest and regret came into Delabarre's eyes.

"Poor child, do you love me as much as that?"

To her his tone seemed one of relenting. Her passion flamed high and shook her so that she trembled.

"I am slowly dying of the intensity of my adoration of you. You have absorbed me and my whole life until there is nothing left me that is mine. I see things with your eyes and feel them with your perceptions. You *are* my life, and you are abandoning me!"

"Come here, child," said Delabarre, with deliberate kindness, "sit near me, and, once again, be calm. I will speak to you words of wisdom, sad as life and beautiful as death. In my youth I was greatly beloved, and I loved greatly. Yet I never surrendered myself completely to the storm of my own passions, and, as the years passed, I learned many wonderful and terrible things. I learned that the supremest love passes inexorably into a friendship sustained by habit, that the most tragic regret fades into a mild recollection of our own grotesque despair. And when I had learned this, something within me died. Your passion, my poor child, seems to me a faint, far memory of half-forgotten days. I could not share it if I would. Yes, even regret perishes, as yours will—regret for that which seemed the very centre of our being, the very life of our souls, our breath, our divinity, our all. Such poor creatures are we. Our end is one of indifference and selfishness. To me the end has long come."

"So Jack was right," she moaned.

"Ah, did he solve the riddle, after all? Did he believe? Go to Jack, my dear. He can still love you as you would be loved."

"You have made love and life impossible to me. You have broken me on the wheel of your fascination, and I am utterly lost!"

"Oh, no, you are not. It will hurt for a while and then you will wake up some violet dawn of Summer and feel the blood of youth in your veins and wonder dimly at your own far folly. No, child, you do not believe that. But it is true. In the meanwhile, this experience has matured your emotions and made deeper your soul, and you will thank me for it—some day."

Delabarre arose with a scarce noticeable gesture of dismissal and walked toward the door. Mrs. Brice, white and faint, followed him.

"I did not ask you to mature my emotions or to deepen my soul," she said. "You came unbidden into my life and ensnared me. Oh, it was unpardonable!"

Delabarre opened the door with studied courtesy.

"Nothing is unpardonable—nothing.
But we all have our weaknesses. Do
you wish to know why I interested
myself in you?"

"I have the right to know!"
"Then, since you wish—it was a
bad habit, dear lady—the habit of
conquest."



BALLADE OF A SUMMER DAY

By Ernest McGaffey

SHE that I loved, she was sweet and slightly,
Cruel, capricious, and hard to please;
She loved me not, or she loved me slightly.
I won her favor by slow degrees;
She loved a lover on bended knees
As one to linger and sue and pray;
But a star may drop from the Pleiades,
And the love that I bore her died one day.

The bonds were loosed that had held me tightly,
Women are women, and such as these
May judge a man and may judge him lightly;
May lock his heart and yet lose the keys.
She swayed my soul as a sudden breeze
Makes the primrose bend in paths of May,
But the primrose lifts when the fierce gust flees,
And the love that I bore her died one day.

I care not now if she loves me rightly;
I found my peace, and I lie at ease,
And watch the sun where it sifts so brightly,
Mellow and calm through the Summer trees.
I list to the hum of drowsy bees
And mark where the sun-crossed ripples play,
But the stream's heart chills when the north winds freeze,
And the love that I bore her died one day.

L'ENVOI

Prince! with the stoic my pride agrees;
I gave my all and I went my way,
But an ebb-tide comes to the deepest seas,
And the love that I bore her died one day.



SHE—Do you believe in fortune-tellers?

HE—Yes. I went to one once, gave her a dollar, and she told me the truth.

"The truth, really?"

"Yes indeed; she said that I was going to be swindled out of some money."

THE SEVEN STAIRS

(AT THE GUILLOTINE)

By Florence Wilkinson

The little page mounted the first step.

SO help me, God, my fingers are red
For love of the Queen, God bless her, he said.
'Tis a gallant world, quoth he.
When one may win by seven small stairs
To high Eternity.
But there's a Thing at top of the stairs
It likes me not for to see.

The little page mounted the second step.

Gently and slow, quoth he,
For these seven stairs are steeper to climb
Than the hills of my Dauphiny.
Has my cheek yet paled? quoth he.
Well begun today is half done, they say.
I would 'twere not so, quoth he.

The little page mounted the third step.

Am I fine on the stairs? quoth he.
There's a troubadour sang at our castle gate
With his foot on the stairs as he fain would climb
To my lady sister. His brow was elate
And his plume it shook when he swelled to the rhyme.
Am I beautiful as he?
And the song was of love, pardie.

The little page mounted the fourth step.

Unbind my hands, quoth he,
And I shall go gladly up to the top
When I go like a lord and free.
Messire, Messire,
O what do I hear?
Or a bird or a voice or a bell-note clear?
(*His own dream wandering on the air.*
For thus they rave who climb the stair.)

Nay, gentle sire, quoth he,
It is my sister in Dauphiny,
The gold-haired girl that is calling to me.
I must answer her, quoth he.

The little page mounted the fifth step.
 Sweet sister, Mélizay, he said,
 By these five fingers dripping red
 And these five stairs that I have trod
 Who go a-bleeding up to God,
 Whatever doth this day arrive
 I fear not any soul alive.
 I beg you when the stairs are done
 Kiss my red fingers one by one,
 And tell the dear Queen I went up
 As if I bore her banquet cup.
 Steady and smiling all the way
 As you have taught me, Mélizay.

The little page stood on the fifth step.
 Here let me pause, quoth he.
 Good gentlemen, I see a sight,
 Dust, foam, a banner—(*Tis a mite,*
His eyes do not perceive aright.)
 Quoth he, It is a mighty bird,
 Red-shouldered, savage, undeterred,
 Most like a wingèd flag, quoth he,
 The oriflamme of St. Denis.
 God, but it leapeth lustily!
 (*He walks already as one dead,*
And this the vision of his head.)

The little page mounted the sixth step.
 Ah, it is brave, quoth he,
 To stand so high, to look so far.
 Grant me a moment's grace, I pray,
 To thank my Queen for this her day.
 Hola! hola! quoth he.
 There's one rides fast, comes like a blast,
 The horse is white, quoth he.
 And that strong scarlet bird I saw,
 The oriflamme of St. Denis.
 Look, gentle sirs!
 (*His vision blurs,*
It is the death pang in him stirs.)
 It is my sister, friends, quoth he,
 The gold-haired maid from Dauphiny.
 Unloose this scarf that I may wave.
 Grant me this boon before the grave,
 This little boon, prithee.

The little page mounted the seventh step.
 (*Seven griefs, seven sins, droned one,*
Before man's life is done.
Our Lady pity thee!)
 Pray on apace, quoth he.
 Hola! hola! her crimson gown
 Flames through the ramparts of the town!
 Aye, dashed with foam, aye, dark with mud,
 Streams forward like a blot of blood.

My sister rideth well, quoth he,
 The gold-haired girl from Dauphiny.
 How good I paused to draw one breath.
 Avaunt, avaunt, the Thing called Death!
 Sister, how brave you bear, quoth he,
 The oriflamme of St. Denis!

*"The Queen's own hand has sealed the deed;
 Kind gentlemen, I beg you read.
 Where is my little lad?" cried she;
 "My eyes are dimmed, I cannot see."*

The little page stood on the seventh step.

Lo! I am mounted high, quoth he.
 The view is passing fair, pardie;
 Sirs, I commend your courtesy.
 Sister, the tears have wet your cheek.
 Now listen to me while I speak:
 I did not stumble on the stair,
 I only paused to breathe the air,
 And that was not a wrong, quoth he.
 What did the dear Queen say of me?



THE PARABLES OF AISSA

By Dorothea Mackellar

THE Hippopotamus kindly patted the Frog, who thereupon died.
 "Sad," wept the Hippo, piously, "but think how I comforted his last moments!"

"Don't get excited," said the Duck to the Hen, when they both were thrown into the water.

The Thoroughbred Horse was driven out by his kind and herded with the Asses. "You will soon feel at home," these told him comfortingly. And it was so.

In the course of time the Eagle died. "See," chirped all the Little Birds, "what comes of flying high!"

"What do you do to keep so beautiful?" they asked the Butterfly.
 "I? I do nothing," she replied.

The young Gnat had a Disappointment.
 "You will get over it in a day or two," said the Elephant kindly.
 But the Gnat died of old age at the end of the first day.

"Have you ever thought, my son, how much time is lost in playing cards?"
 "Often—in shuffling and dealing."

Far too many cooks spoil the broth.

MR. MACHIAVELLI, JR.

By W. Carey Wonderly

“WHO is Anne Berkeley?”
My aunt, Mrs. Leeton, who was pouring tea, looked up at me and smiled. It was the same vague smile which she had always used so effectively when she happened to forget the name of her dinner partner. And, besides, my aunt, as all women are, was created not to answer questions, but to propound them.

“Anne Berkeley is your cousin, Billy,” cooed Drina Johns, helping herself to another scone.

“Well, not a cousin, exactly,” began my aunt with that little air of utter helplessness which so endears her to her friends—of the opposite sex. “Anne is not your cousin, Billy, but rather”—she smiled confusedly—“may we not call her just a relation?”

“Oh, a poor relation,” I returned ungraciously. “That, of course, accounts for her coming to spend the Summer at the Cottage.” I am a poor relation myself, and I know. A Sunday-school picnic is a frightful dissipation compared with the daily routine one is forced to live at the Cottage.

“Billy, you will be very nice to Anne Berkeley, won’t you?” continued my aunt in her high, childish treble. “You will walk with Anne, and talk with Anne, and be very, very nice and entertaining, won’t you, for I am afraid the Cottage is a bit dull for a young girl.”

I glanced at Drina Johns. She was calmly stirring her cup of tea, but I could see quite plainly that her very life hung on my next words. A sense of pity touched my heart. I met my aunt’s eyes without flinching.

“Really, Aunt Belle,” I said, watch-

ing Mrs. Johns the while, “really, I fail to see why I should be bored to death by a gauche miss who should be learning her French verbs in the schoolroom. You know, I have never especially fancied white-frocked ingénues.”

My aunt looked at me as if I were some new and strange animal at the Zoological Gardens. She admires her nephew immensely. “Oh, dear,” she cried, turning to Mrs. Johns, “please listen to that boy, Drina! One would think, to hear you talk, Billy, that you were a blasé man of forty instead of a boy of fourteen.”

“I am quite fifteen, Aunt Belle,” I corrected gently but firmly.

Thus having successfully cornered her, I stole a glance at Drina Johns’s face. It was pink with triumph and I turned away with a smile, for I have long ago discovered this frivolous widow’s secret. And right here let me say that I am not a calf in experience—Uncle Max calls me “our worldly Billy”—though I may be in years, and after all it is the experience that alone counts. Whosoever it may be that said a man is as old as he feels was a gentleman and a scholar. He knew.

“When do you expect Miss Berkeley?” asked Mrs. Johns as she rose to go.

“Edouard has gone to the station now,” said my aunt. Edouard was plain Edward before the arrival of the new Panhard. “Won’t you stay and meet her, Drina? I haven’t the slightest notion what to say to the child.”

“Perhaps you had better have Lawrence down from the nursery, Aunt Belle,” suggested I. “His blocks and toys might help amuse Miss Anne.”

"Anne Berkeley is not an infant, Billy," explained my aunt. "She must be quite—let me see"—and she leaned back in her chair with her eyes tightly closed as she does when she goes to hear Wagner—"yes, she must be quite—"

I signaled to Drina Johns. She smiled back in perfect understanding. "I must run, Belle," she cried. "I am dining out. I will see the infant prodigy tomorrow. *Au revoir.*"

With a little start Aunt Belle came out of her trance. "Not going?" she said. "Oh, dining at the Grays'? Good-bye." And then, when we were half-way down the walk, "Drina, Anne Berkeley is twenty-four!"

I glanced furtively at Mrs. Johns. She had grown very pale and she carried her parasol as if it had done her a personal injury. Suddenly, overcome with pity for the frivolous widow, I seized her sunshade and we walked on in silence. She had said her carriage was waiting in the road and it was only polite to see her safely to it.

"Drina," I whispered. I had never called her Drina before and I thought she would understand just how I sympathized with her by this little delicacy. "Drina," I said, "speak to me, Drina!"

When she made answer her voice was not quite steady, and I caught a glimpse of a teardrop in her beautiful eyes. Her eyes are gray, like Becky Sharp's were, and she uses them outrageously. Enough that I am fireproof, or, perhaps it would be better to say, eyeproof. And I understand widows jolly well.

"Billy," she murmured in a tone that spoke volumes.

When we reached the gate, Drina Johns stopped short, and though I opened it wide to let her pass out she showed no tendency to go. I strained my ears to catch the first sound of the returning automobile bearing Miss Berkeley to the Cottage. I pictured myself lounging in a deck-chair and rising languidly to meet Anne as she came up the veranda steps—there is nothing like making a good first impression, you know—but Drina Johns did not budge an inch. I think, now,

that she was very happy; at least, she smiled.

I mentioned casually that her horses must be very tired of standing still such a while.

She beamed at me. "Why, Billy," she said, "do you belong to that humane society? How perfectly delightful! Come, you may put me in my carriage as a bonus." I think she said bonus.

Secretly pleased that my ruse had succeeded so well, I pressed her hand as I skilfully arranged her parasol beside her. But this was a mistake. "Billy," she whispered jealously, "you must not make love to Anne Berkeley. I give you fair warning!"

"My word, sweet lady, that I live for thee alone," I cried. I had tried to think of an apt quotation and, failing, composed the above myself. I have written it down to use on similar occasions.

Drina Johns blushed at my, seemingly, youthful adoration. "You must lunch with me on Wednesday, Billy," she smiled. "*Au revoir.*"

I sighed with sheer relief when her carriage turned the corner of the road. The Widow Johns affects one like champagne, only more so. Then I settled my cravat, lighted a fresh cigarette, and lounged up the main avenue. As I had supposed, Anne Berkeley had arrived, and they were having a second tea on the veranda. Afar off I espied Laurence. He is my pet abomination, that child, and I fail to grasp why his mother does not keep him in the nursery where he surely belongs. Laurence is seven, and small for his age.

"Cousin Anne's here, Billy," he bleated as I came up the steps.

I uncovered my head and bowed. "Is it cousin?" I asked with a charming smile at Miss Berkeley.

"Why, Billy! You dear thing!" Anne met me with outstretched arms. "And they told me you were a child," she murmured. I mentioned some trifles about my enemies.

"Oh, I am glad I have come," laughed she, and I tried not to look too conscious. Besides, Laurence was

watching me, and I knew he would not miss a chance to say something especially nasty. He never does.

I studied Anne as she sat opposite me in a large, becushioned deck-chair. It had long ago been assigned to me—that chair. No one else ever sits in it. Its blue cushions harmonize so very well with my white flannels, you see.

"Oh, Billy, what a great cousin you have grown to be!" cried Miss Berkeley for the twentieth time. She was evidently trying to atone for the wrong she had done me all unconsciously, when she had mentally set me down as a "horrid child."

"Billy's fourteen," piped Laurence with a cherubic smile. I had known all along it was coming. Beast!

"No, my boy, I am quite fifteen," I returned gently.

"A man is as old as he feels, Laurence," said Anne with great patience. "Your cousin is not a child any more, my dear." And from that moment we were friends. In my gratitude, I so far forgot Mrs. Johns as to press Anne Berkeley's hand. It was a lovely hand, and people will tell you that I am quite a connoisseur where they are concerned. Now, Drina's hand—

"Shall we walk in the garden?" I asked, and Anne consenting, we left Laurence alone to bawl like the little beast he is.

After we had gone a little way Anne suggested that we sit down and talk; so I found a bench near the garden wall from where we could see the new Buchcroft links. We sat down. Anne talked. At her first question, I smiled; at her second, I wanted to laugh outright, but diplomatically refrained. She said: "Do many nice people have cottages at Buchwood, Billy?" and "What sort of a place is the Buchcroft Hotel? Are those—people we see playing golf—er—good people, or are they just city clerks and—and that sort, Billy?" When Anne called the guests at the Buchcroft "good people" she was not referring to their moral characters, you must know. It is merely Miss Berkeley's way. You see, on the links were Mitchell and Lusby and

Fairfax, and Anne, being a woman and single, wondered much.

As a sop to her curiosity I promised to take Miss Berkeley over to the Buchcroft links on the morrow, and I smiled to let her know that I fully understood just what she wanted to ask but had left unsaid. We were very chummy, indeed, by dinner, and when she was saying good night to me she gently squeezed my hand. Unfortunately, however, Laurence was near, and I was obliged to bribe him with the promise of a box of chocolate to keep him from telling Aunt Belle. As it was, he merely grinned, and I did long to box his ears. I will leave you to judge for yourself just what sort of a boy Laurence is—to be bought with a box of chocolate!

On the next afternoon I introduced Anne Berkeley to the canaille who spend their Summer at the Buchcroft Hotel. She looked very fetching in a smart white frock, and she wore pretty petticoats as all girls do who have nice ankles. I felt rather proud of her.

I found Anne a chair near the tennis courts—they were playing tennis today just as people used to do in the dark ages or in the Duchess's novels—and I sat down on the grass beside her. I looked nice, too. I wore my flannels and a heliotrope cravat. One never knows whom one will meet at the Buchcroft, so I had selected heliotrope because it is Drina Johns's favorite color.

So Anne and I sat perfectly still with bored expressions on our faces, and every other second the men—Mitchell and Lusby and Fairfax—would come over to where we sat to look for imaginary lost balls.

"Why, hello, Billy, old man!" they would cry. "Where on earth have you been keeping yourself, eh?"

"I am summering at the Cottage," I would answer, and then they'd go away ashamed and silent, and Anne would sigh as for a lost paradise. I may as well be frank and confess that I am not a favorite with Mitchell and Lusby and Fairfax, and I think I may safely say that it is chiefly because of my immense success with the other sex.

"Who is that man?" asked Anne at last, despair writ large upon her forehead, as Lusby passed us for the fifth time with an encouraging smile in my direction.

"It's twenty dollars a week in a savings bank," I replied. "Do you care to know him?"

"Savings bank! No!" Miss Berkeley sighed and looked at the tips of her white boots. She was thinking, no doubt, of the pretty petticoats wasted so recklessly on the desert air. "Isn't there anybody here, Billy?" she said.

"There's Mason—" I began, "Jim Mason."

"Mason? Mason? Yes, go on, please. I—I am interested in Mason—Mr. Mason, Billy."

I smiled. Evidently Anne had heard of the Mason millions. "Jim Mason," I said slowly, in order to give my words the proper weight, "Jim Mason owns the Buchcroft Hotel. He and his brother Tom own half of Buchwood. Bradstreet rates them as millionaires. Tinned clams, Anne."

"Oh!" cried Anne. She dimpled as if she were having her picture taken, and rearranged her skirts, letting the toe of her boot make glad the hearts of the tennis-playing canaille—the male half, of course. "Billy, dear Billy," she said, "which is Jim Mason?"

I pointed him out to her. "He is twenty-two, all arms and legs and distinctly *passé*," said I, telling the truth and shaming myself. "He goes nowhere, knows no one, and Aunt Belle would not see him if she happened to fall over him. Tinned clams are unpleasant things, Anne."

"Yes, so they are, Billy," returned Miss Berkeley; but I know, poor girl, that she saw only the millions back of the clams. "Could you arrange to introduce him, Billy, dear Billy?" she pleaded. "I once knew—a—a—"

"I might present him," I corrected. "One only introduces an equal, Anne."

Miss Berkeley was beautifully silent, and so should I have been were I guilty of such awful gaucherie. I got up, however, and she followed me across the lawn to where stood Jim

Mason and several Buchcroft girls. They were boring him to death with compliments—you know the type—and when he saw me coming toward him he turned purple with ecstasy. In the past I had never so much as looked in Mr. Mason's direction.

"How are you, Billy?" he cried, just as though I had known him all my life.

I responded stiffly and presented him to Anne. He glanced at her, grew red in the face, stammered like an idiot, and remarked that the day had been very warm. I groaned aloud.

But Anne was quite ready to begin the campaign. "Oh, so warm," she cooed, "and these lawns are so crowded, aren't they? Now, the lake—"

Mason answered with alacrity, and, though I signaled to Anne, she allowed him to carry her away in triumph. The boats on the toy lake hold only two persons, but, if they did happen to carry more, I, of course, would never place myself as a fifth wheel to the wagon. And then, the sun was shining full upon the water, and I looked at Anne's brown-as-a-berry complexion and hoped for the worst.

I went up to the hotel veranda and made myself agreeable to some women who were having their tea served there, and as they were quite old and harmless I let them talk to me, and pour me tea until I saw Anne and Mason come across the lawn. Then I bade them good day. When I caught up to the philanderess, Mason was grinning like a German tenor, and Anne said that he might walk partly home with us. He did.

That same evening I met him at the drug-store down in the village. He greeted me like a long-lost brother, and invited me to have an ice-cream soda with him. Of course, I declined. However much I might crave an ice-cream soda, I would never be seen eating one in a corner drug-store like a shopgirl. So Mason asked after Aunt Belle, bought some chocolate for me to take home to Anne—of course I gave it to Laurence to settle an old debt—and promised to get me a Boston bull—

which I knew would be just the thing to give Drina Johns on her next birthday. Then he suggested that I go for a spin with him in his motor-car, and, not wishing to appear uncivil or to spoil Anne's chances of becoming Mrs. Jim, I consented.

After a while he said: "Buchwood must seem a little dull for a girl like Miss Berkeley, old man. Mrs. Leeton has few callers at the Cottage, I understand."

"Aunt Belle goes about so much all Winter that when Summer comes she is fit for nothing but a good long rest," I returned loftily. "Aunt Belle knows everyone worth knowing, you see. She is the smartest matron in town, the same as Drina Johns is the smartest widow. Only Mrs. Johns is as poor as a church-mouse and my aunt isn't."

"Oh, I see," he said thoughtfully.

But I didn't, and I began to wonder just how he could see Anne, for Aunt Belle would never receive him at the Cottage—a tinned-clams Mason!

The tinned-clams Mason, however, came to the rescue. He did it with great delicacy and tact. He invited Anne and me to go with him to a roof-garden in town, and afterwards a little restaurant supper, perhaps. I was to escort a young French girl who happened to be staying with the Masons, and this, naturally, left Jim with Anne. And I reasoned that Anne should bring to terms a fellow like Mason at a restaurant supper.

To be sure, it is not quite correct for two girls to go unchaperoned to a restaurant with two men whom they know so very slightly as Anne and Mlle. Guyot knew Mason and myself. In fact, I had never even seen the French person, but I rather knew what to expect—she was staying with the Masons. Still, as I afterwards said to Anne, Jim Mason is little better than a beast of the fields—woods, whatever it is—where form is concerned; so while our acceptance may not have been quite good form he would never know the difference and we should, no doubt, get an uncommonly fine supper.

So we went. I invented a wonderful tale about a symphony concert for Aunt Belle's benefit, and Uncle Max—poor, deluded creature—bought us the tickets and made me promise to leave town not later than ten o'clock. At that hour, however, I was listening with rapturous attention to Mlle. Guyot's account of what happened in the Madeleine tram, when she lost her last franc out of the window, and I haven't the slightest idea as to the whereabouts of Anne and Mason. We had met Mason and Berthe Guyot at Hillgrove, the station below Buchwood, and then the thing began in earnest. I won't stop to tell you about everything—it would take too long—but I will say that Berthe was indeed a born Parisienne, and that the supper at Rossi's was alone worth the shame and disgrace of being seen in a public place with a tinned-clams Mason.

When, in the wee, sma' hours of the morning Anne and I stopped on the veranda while I took off my shoes—Anne didn't take hers off—I asked her if Mason had said anything serious, and I smiled when I said serious, for Anne can be very dense when she chooses. She answered me with a little yawn, and from the face she made I am much afraid that the supper did not agree with her. And then, Jim Mason is not a born Parisian, you know.

Faint heart never won millionaire: so I told Miss Berkeley as we started off to the Buchcroft links the next afternoon, and she, poor, disappointed girl, promised me to make another and more strenuous assault at Mason's heart.

And then something occurred. Just as we were entering the hotel grounds I came face to face with Mlle. Berthe Guyot. And, please stop and think, she was wheeling an infant's go-cart! In a moment I understood it all only too well. She was Jim Mason's little sisters' nursery governess. And I had supped with her at Rossi's! You can imagine my feelings. I should have fainted dead away right there in the road, had it not been that I had on a suit of new flannels, and half expected

to meet Drina Johns at the Cottage on our return from the Buchcroft links.

As for that imprudent Guyot person, she stopped short in the road and, leaning on the odious go-cart said: "Eet ess M'sieur Billee. *Je suis charmée de faire votre connaissance, M'sieur Billee.*"

I flashed her one glance. "Come, Anne!" I shouted, and with my well-poised head held high, I swept by the hideous creature.

But, really, Anne was very nice about it. She almost wept when I stormed and raved, and she promised to do my nails the following day if I were not rude to Mason when next we met. As for Mason, poor fellow, perhaps, as Miss Berkeley said, it seemed perfectly proper to him to sup at a smart restaurant with a nursery maid.

When we found him at last he was so servile and humble that I decided to let the thing drop, and besides, I wanted that Boston bull for Drina Johns. Today, Jim had a new treat in store for us. He wanted us to go with him to the Coliseum to see the motor-races. Alas! the day set was Wednesday and I was lunching with the Widow Johns, as you must remember.

"Oh! Too bad you can't go along, old man," he said, which was really very nice of him, you know. "Wednesday afternoon is your music lesson? Oh! too bad, isn't it, Anne—Miss Berkeley?"

Of course I had to pretend to be very sorry that I could not accompany them, but really I should not have cared to go even had I not been lunching with Drina. You see, it's not much fun viewing races and things unless there are plenty of pretty women along, and after the little Guyot episode I was naturally afraid to be seen in public with any of the girls of Mason's acquaintance.

That night, at dinner, I broached the subject of the motor races to Uncle Max. As I had expected, he at once consented and proposed that we go in the new Panhard. He appreciates me, does Uncle Max. He also bought me the tickets and gave me a few notes,

suggesting that I take Anne to the Wayside Inn for luncheon. Of course we had both forgotten to mention that Mason was to meet Anne some little way down the road with his own car and that I was lunching with Mrs. Johns. As for me, I had already pictured myself teuffing up to Drina's doll house in Uncle Max's red machine. I had decided to take her for a spin late in the afternoon.

And speaking of luncheon! It nearly proved to be our undoing. It all came of Anne's appetite. Aunt Belle had expected us to leave home before luncheon, you see, knowing that Uncle Max had suggested my taking Anne to the Inn. But Jim Mason had said nothing about luncheon. I was going to Drina Johns's and I was all right, but Anne—! She declared that she simply could not exist without her luncheon.

"But, perhaps," said I hopefully, "if you grow pale and faint and hint—"

"A lady never hints," groaned poor Anne.

Of course I flushed at her gentle rebuke. "You might let Mason understand that gentlefolk do not lunch before one o'clock," said I.

"He told me to meet him at one-thirty," sobbed she. "No, Billy, it is you who must act. I shall die on the way if I go without my luncheon. Better confess all to Aunt Belle—"

"Never!" I cried in horror. Then more calmly: "I will go and see what cook can do, Anne."

I went. It pains me to hold any conversation whatever with servitors, but I pleaded quite humbly with cook to send up a little luncheon to Anne by way of the back stairs. She promised faithfully that she would—you can guess by this that cook is a member of the other sex—and I ran away like a happy child to dress.

At half-past twelve Edouard brought around the car. Anne and I were on the veranda. I put her carefully in, jumped up beside her and we were off. We drove very slowly because Jim Mason did not expect Anne before half-after one and the distance was not

very far. The day was frightfully hot and sunny. I felt my collar go down like the walls of Jericho before Mrs. Parveau after we had gone two blocks.

Anne had her parasol, but she was obliged to hold it over the cerise roses in her hat, she said.

Well, we reached the rendezvous. Mason, of course, was not there. We waited. Half-after one, no Mason; two o'clock, no Mason. I thought of Drina Johns and sighed, and directly I began to feel empty—I had had no luncheon. I said as much to Anne, but she only smiled sweetly and then I remembered that she had.

Half-past two! No Jim in sight! I turned to Miss Berkeley and asked her what she intended to do.

"Why, wait for Mr. Mason," she answered sweetly.

"Very well," I returned, "you can get out and sit on the grass until he comes, Anne. I am going to Drina Johns's. Get out, please."

But she refused and then we both forgot ourselves and fought like cats and dogs. She shook me, too. I think the sun had affected her brain.

"Don't you dare to speak to me like that," she cried, "and don't you dare to go to Drina's, either! If you do not behave yourself I shall tell Belle the whole thing—and it is all your fault—you have blundered frightfully and so has Jim. Beast!"

I am not sure, but I think that the "beast" was intended for me. Anne looked in my direction when she hissed it, anyway.

"Come!" she said, with a frown, "I am not going to sit here all the afternoon. We will go to the races without Mr. Mason. Do you know the way?"

"Yes. But, Anne, the tickets—"

"Uncle Max bought you tickets."

"Yes, so he did," I smiled, "and I sold them to Mason. You see, they were no earthly use to me and Jim had to have tickets. I thought—"

"Then you can buy others with the money," snapped Anne. "Come, I am ready!"

"I've spent the money," I said truthfully. In fact, I had owed the

confectioner much more than the price of two paltry tickets. Drina Johns must feed her ancient horses on alle-gretti.

Then Anne said this. I feel no shame for myself in writing it down, but rather shame for Miss Berkeley who so far forgot herself and the truth, for there is not one word of truth in it.

Anne said: "Billy Carvel, you are a nasty, horrid little boy who richly deserves to be soundly whipped and put to bed. You are so saturated with French novels, so soaked with English problem plays that you have become one of the great wonders of the universe. You are fourteen now. When you are twenty they will have put you in a cage, charging so much a head to see the marvelous Billy Carvel. You are nasty and horrid! Now!"

"Have you finished?" I inquired politely. "Then let me say that your nose is very red and that it matches charmingly the roses in your hat. Shall we go home?"

You see, at all times I am a gentleman even though I be grossly insulted to my face. And I do believe that it hurt Anne more to be told that her nose was red than it hurt me to be told I was nasty and horrid. And it is quite true about the novels and the plays. I have read and seen everything—Shaw, Ibsen, Zola, Pinero. Laurence, if he has the chance, will tell you that I am not quite sure of my French, but when reading a novel if I cannot just understand a part I imagine it and the book loses none of its interest, either. Imagination is a gift with me.

We went home. Aunt Belle was asleep, and I bribed Edouard not to tell Uncle Max what time we got back. It was just a little after four then, and they did not expect us until seven.

I at once went down to the pantry, and, making a successful raid, hurried back to my room to write an explanation to Drina Johns. I was suffering such pain—neuralgia—Aunt Belle thought it best that I stay in bed, etc., etc. I do not know what Anne Berkeley did all the afternoon, and care less. Perhaps she massaged her nose.

That night, after dinner, Aunt Belle and Anne strolled into the drawing-room, which was opened and brilliantly lighted. The drawing-room at the Cottage is never used, for my aunt sees few people while resting after her somewhat strenuous season in town. So I was surprised, and questioned Jenkins.

"What's on tonight, Jenkins?" I said, meeting him in the hall.

"Hindeed, I don't know, Mr. Billy," he replied. Jenkins is not English, but he likes one to think he is--so does Aunt Belle.

I strolled out on the veranda. After a while, the Mason automobile came up the drive, and Mrs. Mason, Jim's mother, and Tom Mason, Jim's brother, got out and went into the house. I think Aunt Belle so far forgot herself as to kiss Mrs. Mason—or perhaps it was Anne. Miss Berkeley has not yet given up all hopes of marrying Jim, I know.

"My dear lamb!" I heard someone say in a high, squeaky voice. The voice did not belong to either Aunt Belle or Anne Berkeley, so I fancy it must have been Mrs. Mason. And the "lamb" I suppose was Anne, because no one would call my aunt a lamb.

Then there were more wheels on the gravel, and Drina Johns's ancient horses climbed the avenue. Mrs. Johns was driving, and beside her sat Jim Mason—Jim Mason, of all people! Evidently she did not know about the clams.

He helped her carefully out of the carriage, and she pulled a lock of his hair as she had once pulled mine, and directly I heard her saying—through her nose—"Belle, where is dear Billy?"

In a moment I guessed the truth—the whole thing. Anne had told Aunt Belle, and Aunt Belle had sent for Jim Mason to demand an explanation. And Drina Johns had come to find out why I had not kept my luncheon date—to inquire after my neuralgia! I groaned aloud with sympathy for my poor, misjudged self. I sincerely hoped that Anne would end by marrying twenty dollars a week in a bank.

"Where, oh, where, is Billy?" I

heard Drina say again. I could see her, tall, thin, and willowy, and I shivered in my boots. The boots reminded me. I took mine off and started past the drawing-room door. But, alas! the best-laid plans of mice and men, you know. I fell over some toys carelessly left in the hall by my pet abomination, Laurence, and Jim Mason came out to see what was the matter. Drina peeped over his shoulder.

"Billy, dearest Billy," she cooed. "Get him, Jimmy!" And Jim picked me up in his arms and carried me right into the drawing-room without my boots on, too. I remembered, however, that I wore a nice pair of heliotrope socks—the Johns's favorite color—so I did not struggle too much, but just enough to appear modest.

"Billy!" shouted everybody in chorus.

"The little lamb," cooed Mrs. Mason, looking at me as if I were a demi-god. It appears that I, and not Anne, was the lamb, you see. "How old is the little fellow, Mis' Leeton? He seems real cute and smart, bless his little heart."

But they were all talking at once, and so she did not press her question as to my age. They all said things and laughed, and Mrs. Mason kept holding my hand and calling me a lamb until I was afraid to open my mouth lest I should bleat.

And the gist of what they were saying was this: Anne was going to marry Tom Mason, and not Jim. And Drina, not to be outdone, I suppose, had become engaged to Jim Mason, herself. I had brought it all about, it seems, although how, I do not for the life of me know. That was why Mrs. Mason was calling me a lamb. Poor soul, she would get into society at last. Both of her sons were to marry what Anne calls "good" people.

"Billy, you're a brick!" said Tom. It appears that Anne had known Tom Mason for years, but that they had quarreled and most likely would have never seen each other again had I not introduced—presented—Jim. Jim had

talked to Anne until she forgave Tom everything, and Anne, in return, had taken him to call on Drina Johns. It was like a Fitch comedy, only more absurd.

"What would you like, Billy?" Tom said, presently. "A pony?"

A pony! Did he take me for a child? No wonder Drina Johns laughed outright.

"Thanks, you are very kind," I managed to say. "A pony? Well, I shall think it over, thanks."

Then Jim Mason came over and thumped me on the back. I think Jim is beginning to understand somewhat better now. Few people do at first.

"Old man," he said, "I've beaten you, haven't I?—with Mrs. Johns, I mean, but I hope you do not bear me any ill-feeling. And, chappie," he said, as from one man to another, you understand, "I want you to let me give you a motor-car. Tell Drina the make you prefer."

And there stood Mrs. Johns smiling like a cherub—all dressed in silky black. She always wears black, not for her husband, but for her complexion. She looked at me out of the corners of her gray eyes, and then she pulled my hair as she used to do when

she loved me better than the Mason millions.

I sighed a little and hung my head. I do hope her heart ached to think of what she was giving up in marrying Jim. Nevermore would I lunch with her except with Jim sitting opposite us. I sighed again and louder.

"Billy, you fraud," she laughed, "kiss me!"

Kiss her! Never! "No, Mrs. Johns," I said. I was afraid to call her Drina with Aunt Belle's eagle eyes upon me. "No, Mrs. Johns, all that is done with. *Requiescat in pace.*"

"Did you hear that, Belle?" she cried. "Oh, Billy, you will be the death of me! Come, Anne, try your luck with Mr. Machiavelli."

But again I shook my head.

"Thank you, Miss Berkeley, but you see—"

"Oh, Billy!" said Anne with a little smile, "oh, Billy! if you only knew how very happy I am, I think you would forgive me, boy."

Jim was watching me; Tom was watching me; they were all watching me. I remembered the promised motor-car and the depth of the Mason coffers.

"Cousin Anne," I said, blinking my eyes to make them fill with tears, "Cousin Anne, I do."



LIFE-HUNGER

By Arthur Stringer

THE shadowy woods stretch wide and cool and brown,
 Green lie the fields before my careless feet;
 But oh, I long to wander up and down
 The tangled stream of some grim city street;
 To drain once more the cup of crowded life,
 To watch the failure, and the falling crown,
 To read the laughter and the tears of strife,
 To weave the tatters into things complete,
 And all my lonely past and future drown
 In those dark waves of life that round me beat.

CONCERNING DEBT

By Charles Battell Loomis

I TELL you that in this matter of debt it is the little payments that finally wipe it out. No man can expect to keep in debt if he *will* hand out a cheque here and a cheque there.

I knew a man who had a fair income and who was living very comfortably. He owed a lot of money, and I believe his creditors had given up all hope of getting a cent from him. He had not paid a penny on his back debts for years, and if he had allowed them to become outlawed he would have continued to live comfortably, as he was getting a good salary, but there came a time when he decided to send a small cheque to each of his creditors. There were not over twenty creditors, and I do not think he made out any cheque for more than ten dollars, but it was a *drain* on him. He had established a leakage, and its immediate effect was that he had to shut down on some of his comforts.

It might have stopped there, but it did not. Next month he made similar payments, and had to forego more comforts.

You will say, Why didn't he stop when he saw he was being pinched? I cannot tell you why he did not. Perhaps he thought that the money he owed would do good to his creditors; perhaps he felt he was a bit of a benefactor in thus paying his debts. Who can tell what a man is thinking of when he takes the first step in a habit? For that's what it finally amounted to in the case of my friend. The first payments were impulsive, and I, for one, did not think they would be repeated. It was a distinct surprise to me when he made his second payments. I found

that I had not known my friend as well as I thought I had.

Another month went by and again my friend got out his cheque-book and made out a lot more cheques, not one of them big in itself, mind you, but the twenty amounting to a pinching sum, and that grand old debt, that historic debt of his, that had loomed up before him for so many years, was perceptibly smaller.

Why, he'd grown used to that debt! It was like a mountain that a man sees from his chamber window, and that he comes to look upon as a loved and inseparable companion, and here it was slowly but surely vanishing.

Perhaps he said to himself at this point: "Here, I've gone far enough; these people did not expect me to pay this money and they were happy without it. I'll stop."

But did he stop? No. Habits are insidious, and before he knew it another month had come round and he had made out twenty cheques again. And, although he now distinctly felt the pinch of comparative poverty, he did not seem to be able to break himself of his newly acquired habit.

Now, my dear friends, no man can go on systematically making great draughts on his indebtedness and expect it to remain what it was. We are told that the constant dropping of water will wear away a stone. My friend may have thought he was not paying out very much at a time, even though he was unable to command all his former creature comforts; but it takes but four weeks to make a month, and weeks flow on inevitably, and at an even rate, and at last my friend looked

before him and—his mountain of debt was gone! It had vanished in thin air. He would never see that particular mountain again.

Oh, my friends, it's the first step that counts! If he had not yielded to his desire to make out a lot of little cheques, he might today be owing all that money, and living as he had done with not a want unfulfilled.

But there is a silver lining to every cloud. That man today *is* living as he did. He has stopped paying debts, because there are no more to pay. He has broken himself of the habit, and now he pays cash, and he tells me he is just as happy as he was formerly. Perhaps so.

I tell him he is lucky to have the cash. It's not to be had for the picking up.



A SONG OF LOVELACE

By Theodosia Garrison

LOVE is the substance, and the shadow I
Who needs must follow, follow as he goes,
In the noon sun or when the moon is high,
Through flowered fields or empty heights of snows.
My lot it is to follow till I die
Close on the pathways of his wayward will,
And afterwards, I doubt not, faithfully
My ghost must travel in his footprints still.

How canst thou blame the shade's inconstancy?
How canst thou clamor for a shadow's faith?
Blame Love, who goes his way unstayed and free,
Not this poor slave who follows as he saith.
Oh, flower-lips, not long ye hold the bee—
Roses are many and the world is wide.
Cry out on Love the fickle, not on me;
I still must turn when most I would abide.

Love, who created me, hath made me his.
Not mine the peace of hearthstone and of home,
Love goes a-gypsying on paths of bliss
Swift as a wave and light as wind-blown foam;
And as he bends I bend to kiss his kiss,
And as he turns I turn. Ah, sweet, good-bye!
Not wholly shalt thou hate me, knowing this—
Love is the substance, and the shadow I.



DUFF—Yes, she's very eccentric.

GRUFF—Minds her own business, I suppose?

MADE IN HEAVEN

By J. J. Bell

SCENE: *A Ball-room (on Earth)*

HE
WHY, Mabel!—pardon!—Mrs. Brown,
This pleasure's unexpected! . . .
And do you stay once more in town
So long by you neglected?
Now—let me see—how time *does* fly!—
How many years—
SHE (quickly) Oh, plenty!
To be precise, since you and I
Last met, it's one-and-twenty!
HE (politely) What! twenty years since last we danced
Together—
SHE (lightly) Well, no matter! . . .
Of course we've changed. . . . When first I glanced
At you I thought you fatter.
HE (smiling) And you?
SHE (sharply) Oh, I am middle-aged,
And know it, Mr. Ingle!
And . . . you are married? No? Engaged?
HE (mockingly) Alas! I still am single.
SHE (suddenly pleasant) Your fault, I'm sure!—or, is it faults? . . .
Ah! here comes Rose, my daughter.
Her first big dance. . . . Her second waltz
With that Lieutenant Slaughter!
HE (with real admiration) A charming girl! . . . Might I aspire
To hope for presentation?
SHE Of course! . . .
(Performs introduction)
Ah, Rose, your bows require
The slightest alteration.
(whispering) Now, Rose, you simply *must* obey!
Come, no more school-girl fancies! . . .

(aloud)

Yes, Mr. Ingle, Rose would say
She still can spare some dances.

HE (to Rose)

Delighted! Thanks so much! . . .
(aside)

That tall

Young bounder looks dejected.

(aloud)

Shall we begin? . . . And is it all
As nice as you expected? . . .

SHE (aside, as she watches the pair)
Heav'n send a little sense to Rose! . . .

Heigh-ho! that old flirtation! . . .

And now he's rich. . . . And, goodness knows,
I need a rich relation!



A BLOW-OUT

By Tom Masson

WITHERBY paused in front of a haberdasher's window. He needed a new cravat.

"That's a stunning-looking thing," he said to himself. He stepped inside.

The cravat was three dollars—more than Witherby had ever paid—but after some discussion of its merits, he bought it, and walked out.

As the knowledge of the new cravat began to work into his consciousness Witherby awoke to the fact that his shirts were not what they should be—nor did the collars he wore go with that tie—they were too cheap.

He went back and ordered some shirts and collars.

Then he stopped at his tailors' to get a new suit.

Then it occurred to him that his evening clothes were altogether too shabby for a gentleman of his standing.

In two hours' time he had spent nearly four hundred dollars on a new wardrobe. Shamefaced, remorseful, hating himself heartily, he made his way home.

He entered the hall. He walked upstairs. At the door of her dressing-room his wife came forward. In an excess of affection she threw her arms about his neck.

"Darling," she murmured, "will you forgive me?"

"What have you done?"

"I've been shopping—and I've been extravagant. I started with a simple little gown. One thing led to another—I'm afraid I've ordered a lot. Oh, dear, I know you will never forgive me!"

Witherby, unable to contain himself, danced about the room in an excess of joy.

"Hooray!" he exclaimed.

His astonished wife gazed at him in anxiety. "What can you mean?" she cried. "What is the matter?"

"Why," cried Witherby, "when I came home just now I actually believed that I was the biggest fool in the world. And it's such a relief to know that I'm not!"

BOHEMIA, NEW YORK

By Richard Duffy

BOHEMIA, New York." Truly, a strange address, and one that only Faunce would be courageous enough to give to a cabman. He told me the circumstances; and, if you knew him as I do, you would listen, and never pause to consider whether you should believe.

It was in Madison Square, at the early hour of two, when the dark upper stories of the buildings on all sides look visionary in the gold-dust glow of distant stars. Faunce hailed the last cabman at the stand, and, with many assurances of his ability to see intelligence, talent—nay, a capacity for higher things in his weather-beaten face—bade him drive on wings to "Bohemia, New York." The cabman replied to the purple allocution with, "Get in!" Away they went. In ten minutes Faunce found himself at Bellevue Hospital, and heard the driver and a policeman exchanging vague sentences about the psychopathic ward.

Of all men, Faunce is the last who needs inquire the way to bohemia. To be accurate, he has never been able to find the way out of it. He shows the climatic stamp of the strange, unreckoned zone, as plainly as the Eskimo shows the impression of his habitat. Apparently he wears such clothes as you or I, yet he wears them with a difference. His hair is short, his face shaven, his nails clean—and he is never seen in a café or a restaurant that the proprietor advertises as "Rendezvous des Bohemiens." After all, that's why he is a real bohemian.

As soon as an eating-place, a café or a *clique* is labeled "Bohemian," thither crowd haberdashers, jewelers, book-

keepers, clothing salesmen, traveling men, belated suburbanites, and other dull respectables with yearnings for what they call "the artistic side of life." Hall-rooms, counters, showcases and sample-cases are forgotten as they gabble in parrot fashion of the style of George Barr McCutcheon and the impressionism of Howard Chandler Christy, whom they once saw riding in a cab. Then, the Neapolitan orchestra from Elizabeth street plays selections from "Carmen" for the eighth time and they all yell the Toreador song at the top of their voices, while the cloak models round about make a noise like castanets by snapping their fingers.

In such a resort as this, used to appear regularly a man, about thirty-five, of most distinguished appearance. I have heard him described as a tenth-carbon copy of Alphonse Daudet, and was informed, on various occasions, that he was an opera singer, fallen on evil days; a painter, who had left Paris on account of a matrimonial tangle; a composer, who would have done great things if he had not had the misfortune to possess a comfortable income; and an Italian nobleman, in exile for political reasons. He looked as foreign as an ocean steamship, and talked the purest New Yorkese, with vagrant broad *a*'s, as in *glass, past, last, can't*. One night, during the eighth bellicose rendition of the Toreador song, his waiter whispered to him that he was wanted at the telephone. All the passion of Spain fled from his face. He settled his bill hurriedly, and moved away, solemn and slow, as if the fumes, reek of Scotch, and the blurred faces and fading eyes were but figments of a

dream. I asked the waiter who he was. The waiter reflected a moment, and then confided, with a most discreet glance:

"Il est entrepreneur de pompes funèbres." Adding by way of compensation: *"Il gagne énormément."*

An undertaker! I tried to imagine what some of the other Toreadors for a night might be; and saw only two or three in the whole long room that were known to subsist on the precarious revenue of the arts.

With most things, as soon as you give them a name, their character is fixed. Just the reverse is true of bohemia. Let the word be passed that such a restaurant is "very bohemian," and it begins to cease to be such from that period. The manager, of course, will make more money under the new order; but what is money in that dim, enchanted land, bounded on the north by Hope, on the east by Courage, on the west by Dreams, on the south by Memories, and everywhere ringing with the leaping laughter of Youth? It is the one province whose boundary gates do not unlock to the key of wealth. In bohemia the possession of money deprives one of all rights of citizenship, so that eventually there is only one course—self-exile. That is why you find no successful artists there. It is the land in which to grow old is to be unhappy. It is the limbo of those that have failed and still aspire, as it is the Eden of those that have yet lived only long enough to aspire. It is the haven of those that shift responsibilities in business and in love—therefore, for a great many, the only place fit to live in. It is not marked on the map, so that no policeman or cab-driver can guide you to it. And if you are born to it, no mentor can warn you away or wheedle you with aureate promise or ready money. Great novels, great plays, great paintings, great statues, great symphonies are achieved in bohemia and vanish into air with the last puff of the last cigarette. And then some dwarfed semblance of the great work is painfully produced in the chill and gloom and loneliness of a garret, eu-

phemistically called studio, and given to the world, even as the imaginings, the whisperings, the silences of love dissolve in vapor and from the cruelty of birth results the man. Pitiable they that are barren in bohemia! Hugging delusion to their heart, they pursue and ever faster pursue the will-o'-the-wisp of accomplished effort. But it is only true to set down that often the painter, who splashes huge canvases in the tiny rings he spouts from his cigarette, becomes a prosperous and contented "Maker of Artistic Picture Frames"; and she of the copper-red hair that sculpted fruitlessly in bohemia, marries a tobacco merchant of artistic *penchant* and has three children in the primary school at Flushing, Long Island. Each one of them, she is sure, will be an artist of some sort. It does take an artist of some sort to make delectable cigarettes.

Once bohemia in New York was to be discovered at certain obscure table-d'hôte restaurants where the dinner cost forty or fifty cents, with wine. Some people still find it there; but it seems to me that the cheap table-d'hôte restaurant has been commercialized to the lowest possible degree. There is just as much food as ever crowded into the dinner formula of eternal sameness; and it is even less appetizing than before. *Hélas!* it may be that I have changed, and not the food. In any case, I must confess that of all schemes for dinner, the table d'hôte, whether it cost fifty cents or a dollar-fifty, is the most barbarous and inhuman. To think that, in the matter of dinner, involving such qualities of mind as taste, tact, judgment, invention, foresight, experience, psychologic perceptiveness, one should meanly and weakly submit to the direction of a man who buys the materials of which your dinner is composed as if you were Jones, who can eat anything, or Smith, who eats to drink, or the man who takes six courses of spaghetti and finishes with the ceramic product, known in table-d'hôte restaurants as ice-cream.

To be sure, the native-born bohemian worries less over the quality or kind of

food he gets than he does over getting food at all. Most of them rarely get as much as they need, which, perhaps, explains their usual condition of good health. What they wear makes a greater demand on their imagination and their earnings. Those that have spent a year or two in Paris will tell you that they cannot go about here in the picturesque remnants that are a mark of caste *sur la rive gauche*. Nothing is so unforgivable to the conventional eye of the Anglo-Saxon as oddity of personal appearance. That is why my friend of earlier mention looks just as well groomed as you or I. He is a genuine bohemian, too, let me repeat. Once I was at the point of telling him so, when he interrupted me with:

"Stop right where you are, old man, and let me say something. The other night I was dining with a certain person"—a look in his eye made me understand whom he meant—"and I received this compliment: 'You have been a great gallant in your time.'" He paused, and added: "Only then did I realize my age. So please don't you inform me that I have always been a bohemian."

And he went on to explain that not "*might have been*," but "*has been*" are the saddest words of tongue or typewriter.

Incidentally, he does not believe that bohemia exists in New York, nor even in Pittsburg. And he will end one of the arraignments habitual to him when he is on the subject with a line from Baudelaire:

"*J'aime les nuages . . . là-bas!*"

I have never known a New York bohemian who was not consumed with longing for the clouds far away there. For many it keeps up the interest in life. No matter how slender their artistic endowment, they feel that in Paris they would be on hospitable soil. They imagine the Isles of the Blest located somewhere in the neighborhood of the Boul' Mich', where there is the cheapest, dearest little restaurant of which they have often heard but can

never remember the name. In December they are always going abroad next Summer. They vanish into the Catskills in July, and talk of going to Paris in November. The Winter season is always so much more interesting, on account of the theatres, the opera, concerts, balls, etc. So they dream on and never go, yet never realize how blessed is the dream than the reality. And they read all the latest French novels as soon as they appear in translation.

But may the good Lord deliver me henceforth and forever from the bohemian or bohemienne who has been in Paris—not long, you know, but just a few months—under oath, three days and two nights. These widely traveled persons cannot see North River flounders come on the table as *sole à la Marguery* without telling all about the real sole at Marguery's in Paris. Why, this is no more to be compared with it than roses with cabbages! Then, Marguery himself is such an interesting type, has long white hair and a face like François Coppée's. Most distinguished *allure*, and "he spoke to us graciously, and with such dignity—for a restauranteur."

After all, it may not be incorrect to divide bohemians in New York into two classes: Those that have been to Paris and those that are going to go there. If we were to search down into the heart of the first class we might discover disappointments and heartburnings that are never confessed even to themselves. For that is the wonder of Paris—it is the most magnificent illusion in the world. Also, no one betrays the secret. Only a philosopher like Tim Sullivan gets near the truth when he sums up his impressions of the city in one sentence: "I heard some French spoken on the boulevards. But Paris is very much like New York, only not so good."

The happier New York bohemians are they that can write dream-poems to Paris Unvisited. They are the perfect neophytes, unsullied of doubt, who trace their lineage—*vide* Murger—from that renowned bohemian that

walked in Ionia's blossoming ways, eating alms-bread, and stopping at night to hang at some hospitable hearth the many-harmonied harp, to which he sang the Loves of Helen and the Fall of Troy. In the Middle Ages they find their prototypes in the Troubadours; and of their later distinguished relations may be named Pierre Gringoire and François Villon. Yet the forbears they talk of most are Schau-nard, Rodolphe, Mademoiselle Musette and Mademoiselle Mimi. They talk most of these because they know them best; and they know them best because they never existed save in imagination, that mysterious realm where unrealities are more real than actualities in the world of fact.

Moreover, they will tell you that bohemia exists, and can exist, only in Paris. You listen attentively and they continue to recall Murger and deliver his utterance as if their own: "Bohemia is the preface of the Academy or of the Morgue. Bohemians know everything, go everywhere, according as they have patent-leather shoes or are down at the heel. Today one meets them in a drawing-room, tomorrow in a cheap café. They are at home in either place; and they can't walk along the boulevard half a block without meeting a friend, or a whole block, anywhere, without running into a creditor."

You listen and you marvel, for you know the man talking has only a bill-of-fare knowledge of French, and that the nearest he has ever been to Paris is a Sixth-avenue restaurant where they serve snails and other Gallic delicacies in *provincial* style. Still, his *vie de Bohème* and his *Boul' Mich'* are much more tangible than they will be when comes the long-looked-for tomorrow that he shall cross the mighty sea.

La jeunesse n'a qu'un temps! Then find bohemia here before it is too late. Who was it that said, "Bohemia is not a place, but a time"? Schau-nard, Rodolphe, Mimi, Musette, walk about us, awaiting the impalpable accent that compels recognition. Their clothes, it is true, are different; their

hair kempt, and the French they talk a melancholy perversion even of that *argot* before which quail makers of dictionaries for the Republic. Some sticklers for realism have gone so far as to cavil that the New York bohemian bathes too often and shaves with religious regularity. Waiving these flaws, it must be granted that he adheres to tradition in eating, drinking and smoking as cheaply as he can, and that he despises the *bourgeois* with instinctive bohemian scorn.

No trait marks his youth so unmistakably as the bohemian's contemptuous eye for the *bourgeois*; and this, despite the fact that his own father is one, being a rich and prominent manufacturer, somewhere west of Jersey City, whose remittances are unfailing. Of course, he loves his father, and feels a bit ashamed of the rôle he plays when the indulgent parent unexpectedly pops in upon him at his shabby studio. He tries to call him "governor," as artist bachelors of fiction do, but the word dies in his throat, and he simply grips his hand, and feels embarrassed before the moisture that suddenly shows in father's shrewd, but sentimental, gray eyes. Then, after father has made him order clothes to last the year, and has wined and dined him for a week, only at the best hotels, he sees the remitting parent off at the station, with just a shadow of the first great gloom of homesickness. And he returns to his friends with a feeling that, after all, "the governor"—he can say it now—has a considerable fund of artistic understanding and appreciation.

The bohemienne, on the other hand, rarely has a rich father to visit her in this prodigal fashion. If she had a rich father she would still be at home in the little middle-Western village where she was born, and where she was the brightest girl in the school, especially "at writing compositions." In the ample spaciousness of a bandbox flat she recalls humorously the cramped life back there in the country. She shrugs at the memory of the heavy breakfasts she used to eat in those

days. Now all she takes is "a roll and a cup of coffee"; and she always dines out. After two or three years of arduous cultivation she has got to the point where she really likes a cigarette with her *demi-tasse*. If only her big brother, who has stuck to the farm back there, were to see her tip a cocktail upside down, and then nonchalantly deliver the carefully prepared line that is to signal her actual presence at the dinner: "A cocktail is an epigram in liquid form." She has said it on two or more occasions, but tries to make sure that her present auditor is new to it. Excepting these minor dissipations, which, more often than not, are part of her attitude, the bohemienne is much the same girl as when she came from Valley Centre and changed her name from Marie to Mary. She discusses the most intimate problem plays with a fine frankness and the challenging look that seems to say, "This is art, and I'm not afraid to speak up. But you know perfectly well that down in my heart I'm a strict little Puritan, and such art has nothing to do with my way of living. In fact,

I believe it belongs only to European civilization—and I'm an American." You see, her bohemianism is a garment that can be laid away almost as readily as the bizarre chains and brooches and rings she picks up, in lieu of real jewelry, at quaint curio shops. None of the men and women whose society she frequents now and whom she calls by their Christian names has ever met a single relative of hers. They know her, as she knows them, as isolated human beings who have come from somewhere, find life brilliant and alluring here, then unexpectedly, and unnoticed, drift beyond the horizon. The day comes when she herself vanishes, and the woman that she has been becomes submerged in a new incarnation. The coast of bohemia is a delightful place in Springtime and in Summer. With Autumn, a chill descends upon the land; Winter there is tragic: and Winter comes relentlessly.

*Notre jeunesse est enterrée,
Au fond du vieux calendrier.
Ce n'est plus qu'en fouillant la cendre
Des beaux jours qu'il a contenus,
Qu'un souvenir pourra nous rendre
La clef des paradis perdus.*



A ROAD SONG

By Mary Lowell

A ROAD in the sun with the winds for play,
A lilt in my heart to the tune of the day,
The blue of the sky and the green of the sea,
Through the roll of the years sing delight to me.

A wood-depth skirting the open way,
The rain-cloud dashing my face with its spray,
The gleam of the sea and the gloom of the sky
Sing the song of the years as they pass me by.

Shadows a-swing at the moon of the day,
A shimmer of stars on the darkling way,
The cry of the winds to a leaping sea,
Make the sum of the years doled out to me.

THE FINAL HOUR

By Katharine Metcalf Roof

THE baby had not at any time entered into the Czarina's calculations. It was, from the moment of its arrival, an irrelevant addition to the household, accorded the indifferent hospitality of bed, board and service, like a paid guest. The baby, however, did not realize that its company was undesired, and with the passing of the weeks became large and fair and cheerful.

The same description might inadequately have served to describe the baby's mother. But the Czarina's admirers, who had given her the nickname eloquent of their complete subjugation, would have instantly resented any such inadequate characterization, and would have proceeded at once to depict her with adjectives profuse and equally inadequate—the inexpressive superlatives of the childlike mind. The Czarina's admirers were not of an advanced stage of mental development.

The Czarina was an exponent of light opera—the lightest possible. She had also, besides her beauty, a light heart and a light mind, and, in addition to this equipment, possessed the agreeable—but from the managerial standpoint, not essential—qualification of a sweet voice. The Czarina's type of beauty might fitly be described as the apotheosis of the obvious. Never were there features of such unchanging regularity; never was hair more gold, cheeks more pink, eyes more blue; not the pink and blue and gold of the footlights, but real pink, real gold, real blue—colors that would wash and stand the sunlight.

The Czarina's culpable lightness of

89

heart had supposedly been the cause of her regained freedom. It is true that the partner of her brief matrimonial venture had denied her the existence of such an organ, but that may well have been the utterance of a bitter mood. The Czarina was a difficult woman to quarrel with, and that, to one in the husband's state of mind, was an excuse for any bitterness.

The baby evidently inherited this irritating amiability, for it had been from the first what nurses call a "good baby." Its nights were quiet and slumberous, and its days gay and observant. It was a cross to its nurse that the Czarina omitted to keep herself informed upon the subject of the baby. One day, however, catching the exponent of light opera in an idle moment, the old woman corralled the young one, and, leading her in triumph to the nursery, formally presented the mother to her child.

The Czarina glanced at her daughter, and her daughter, after a thoughtful moment, smiled.

"Why, she has a tooth!" observed the Czarina.

"An' her only three months old," responded the nurse vaingloriously. "She's a fine baby, ma'am, an' that's a fact."

"And she has quite a lot of hair. I thought all babies were bald."

"Not all of 'em. Yes, she's a fine head of hair; the same color as yours, ma'am."

The Czarina bent down for a closer inspection. The baby, perhaps unduly exhilarated by the tribute to her hair, made a sudden dash at the Czarina's coiffured gold and held it fast,

gurgling with acquisitive joy. The Czarina burst out laughing.

"How she pulls! Isn't she strong!"

The baby, as if satisfied at this demonstration of its powers, released its mother's hair. The Czarina put out a tentative forefinger and timidly poked the child, with some vague idea that it was the proper courtesy to babies. The baby caught the forefinger and held it fast, laughing again immoderately at the joke.

The Czarina looked up at the nurse shyly. "She's real cute, isn't she?" she said.

II

THE next morning on her way to rehearsal it occurred to the Czarina to pay a visit to the nursery. The baby was just awakening from her morning nap. The nurse caught her up with the inconsequence of the accustomed. The Czarina looked alarmed.

"Aren't you afraid of hurting her?"

"Law, no; she won't break. Here, take her a second while I look for that sock. You'd never believe how far she can throw 'em."

The Czarina took her daughter gingerly and respectfully. "How heavy she is!"

"She's big for her age. She's built like you be."

The Czarina looked down at her baby, an uncertain light struggling over the fixed beauty of her face. "She is big; and she hasn't been named yet."

"Her papa wanted her called Faith, after his mother," nurse reminded her; "but she ain't never been baptized, an' it's a wicked shame."

"Faith." The Czarina looked down at the baby, trying the name on her doubtfully. "Well—he can call her that if he likes. I guess I'll just call her baby."

"She can't stay baby forever," retorted nurse severely.

The Czarina looked up with a startled light in her eyes. A knock at the nursery door was followed by the announcement injected through the

crack, "Cab's ready." The Czarina's servants were not formal.

"I'll take her now." Nurse came up with her businesslike manner.

"The Czarina's arms tightened suddenly about the child. She hesitated a moment, then quickly, and a little shamefacedly, bent her head over the baby's. When she raised it her cheeks were as pink as the child's ribbons. She delivered it over to its guardian with an attempt at careless observation.

"It's such a lovely, sunshiny day I should think maybe she might go out, Ellen."

"Law, ma'am, she goes out every day. I'm just getting her ready now."

The Czarina paused half-way to the door to say a little resentfully:

"Some day I'll take her out with me in the carriage."

"Some day," responded Ellen tolerantly.

Then the Czarina made a discovery.

"She's my baby." With this declaration she beat a hasty retreat.

III

THE baby did not work a complete transformation in the Czarina's life. The maternal instinct is a varying fraction of a woman's nature, the greater part with some, a fluctuating quantity with others. The Czarina loved her child and loved to have it about. She cared enough for it to leave it behind with Ellen when she went on the road, but it never occurred to her to give up the life of the foot-lights with its attendant distractions and diversions. She was also a woman of business, even if that business were the profession of furnishing amusement. The Czarina had been born in New England, and she had a certain conscience about her light-minded work. She would not neglect either work or the baby for pleasure. Yet she always had an hour sometime in the day for the child.

Four years passed quickly, and the baby had ceased to be a baby, save in

her mother's feeling. She had become a beautiful doll of a child with an astonishing quantity of fluffy blond hair which had caused her mother to nickname her, light-mindedly, Fluff. She often took drives with the Czarina, but was never visible to that lady's guests.

One Sunday afternoon the Czarina and her daughter sat on the floor of the actress's sunny living-room cutting out paper dolls. An unexpectedly early caller, informally ushered in, discovered the two with their heads together, absorbed and merry. The caller was a jovial soul, and began laughing sympathetically.

"Well, well!" he ejaculated. After a moment he repeated his words. They seemed to be the only adequate expression of his mental state. Presently his thought became a shade more definite.

"So that's your kid?"

"Yes."

"Well, she's a little beaut, right, isn't she? Takes after her mother."

"She's a good little thing."

The child, shrinking against her mother, stared at the guest for a moment with a child's frowning intentness, then markedly averted her head. The guest laughed uproariously at this action.

"What's her name?"

"Oh, er—I call her Fluff."

"Fluff? Well, well, that's good. That'll do. Come here, Fluff, and tell me if you like candy. If you'll give me a kiss I'll—"

The Czarina swept the child up with a sudden strong arm. "It's time for her nap," she remarked, and made an unceremonious exit.

That evening she stood looking down at her sleeping child with a new expression on her face. So Ellen, returning to the nursery after an exhausting Sunday afternoon of pleasure, found her.

"Do you think she looks quite as well as she did, Ellen?"

"Well? Law, she's as strong as an ox! Never seen a healthier child."

"Somehow New York doesn't seem

just the right place for a child. Maybe she'd be better off in the country."

"I allus wanted you to send her an' me into the country."

"I know." The Czarina thought deeply, only to repeat her own words in a lower voice. "It don't seem just the right place for a child." Then she thought again. When at last she looked up, even Ellen could realize a look of grave decision on that ordinarily untroubled face.

"I'm going to send you both to the country to—to live."

"To live! An' you—"

"It'll be somewhere near the city, I'll go down often. I'll come down Sundays and see her."

The Czarina left the room abruptly without kissing the child good night.

IV

THE Czarina was true to her word. She found an old stone house set in the midst of an apple orchard in an unpopular New Jersey suburb, and there she took the baby and left it. Whenever it was practically possible she spent her Sundays there. For week-end excursions of pleasure her merry companions found her no longer available. The child was never given as her excuse, however. To these gay associates she never spoke of her child. The husband and father had long since melted away into the world of bygones. The Czarina was left in undisputed possession.

All went on peacefully and evenly until the child was eight years old. She was never ill and apparently always happy. The little girl looked upon her mother as a bright angel visitant from another world, having the incomparable advantage over other angelic guests of being a delightful playfellow.

One sunny September day the three were together in the little orchard which encompassed the house. The child was climbing a tree. The mother and nurse were sitting on the grass. The latter was holding forth upon an old grievance.

"Such a smart child to learn, an' her not even knowin' her letters, an' me not fit to teach her. It's a wicked shame to us, ma'am, that's what it is!"

"Oh, there's plenty of time for her to learn letters. I wanted her to grow up strong and happy and play out in the sunshine. I never had enough of it when I was a child."

"A good thing, too, ma'am, but there's an end to all things. She can't keep on playin' in the sunshine forever. She's got to learn things sometimes. She's a big girl now. Look at her!"

The Czarina looked, and a faint frown troubled her smooth brow. Her daughter was "a big girl." She watched the nimble red legs thoughtfully. Ellen had a frivolous taste for red stockings—a frivolity, chastened by the strength and thickness of the material. The mother sighed as all mothers must at such moments.

"I suppose it is time to send her to school. But I hate so to send her away. I have felt so safe having her here with you."

"To send her away!" Ellen echoed the Czarina's words sharply. "What for would you be sending her away, I'd like to know? Ain't there a good school right here in the village? The schoolma'am's been here twict already."

The Czarina shook her head. "I don't want her to go to the village school. I'm going to send her to a convent in the country near New York. It's a school where very little children go."

The tears rushed to Ellen's eyes at the realization of this catastrophe that she had helped to bring upon herself. "You'd be sendin' her away from me," she whispered. "I ain't never thought of that!"

The Czarina looked at the old woman pityingly, yet with a certain dignity. "I sent her away from me, and I am her mother," she said. Then she turned from the sight of the old woman's grief-stricken face. In the silence a kitchen clock struck the hour with loud, dogmatic strokes.

The Czarina started up. "I must go

or I will miss my train. Fluff, Fluff, come here and say good-bye to mother."

The child ran lightly across the grass and caught her mother about the waist.

"You are always going away," she pouted.

The Czarina patted the Christmas-doll head. "And always coming back." She bent down and kissed the child lingeringly. "You are growing up—so fast—so fast. Pretty soon I won't have any little girl any more."

The little girl clung to her mother passionately. "You shall—you shall! I won't ever grow up if you don't like it."

The Czarina looked back from the car window until the two figures standing on the platform—the child and the old woman—were lost to sight. Then she leaned back with a long sigh.

"In a few years—" she said.
She did not finish the sentence.

V

THE child was happy at the convent. The Czarina's visits always left a feeling of warm content in her heart. Faith was a good and gay little girl, as she had been a good and cheerful baby. She was loved by all the sisters and got on well with the other children. There were never any tales or complaints to greet the Czarina on her arrival. If, as someone had suggested, the years of unnatural repression practiced by the Czarina's New England ancestors had finally broken loose in the light-mindedness and light-heartedness of that lady, it would seem as if in the child the balance had somehow been recovered, and she had retained the soundness and strength of her Puritan forefathers, combined with the leaven of her mother's cheerfulness. In a vague way the Czarina apprehended this and was glad.

She had asked at first that the child's parentage be kept a secret, but somehow the fact had leaked out.

"Mary O'Connor says my mother is an actress and that everybody knows

who she is." The child went with the information to Sister Elizabeth.

"Yes," the sister admitted after a moment.

"Then how many people must love her," was the little girl's conclusion.

"She is very much admired," was the sister's frugal answer.

"Sister Elizabeth, don't you think my mother looks very much like an angel?"

"She is very beautiful," the sister replied after a moment's hesitation.

"And she is so good. I don't believe there is anyone else so good in the whole world, not even you, Sister Elizabeth, nor the mother superior—"

An expression crossed the nun's void face. "She is a very good mother," she interposed hastily, "but it is near the supper hour, Faith, and you must go to your room and brush that untidy hair."

"Your daughter knows," the sister told the Czarina on her next visit, "of your profession."

A quick question leapt into the actress's eyes, and the nun, reading it, said:

"She does not, of course, know yet just what that profession means—"

"No—no, she shall not know—she shall never know, so long as I can help it, Sister Elizabeth."

"It would be well, perhaps, that she should go into the church. She loves the church. She spends more than half of her money on flowers for the altar."

"She loves flowers," the Czarina answered doubtfully.

"In the church only is complete peace; in the world she—"

"Yes, yes. I will think about it. We do not have to decide it yet, sister."

"Not immediately." The nun's lips closed thinly. "But it must be thought of. Faith is growing up."

The next night was the first night of "The Queen of the Tuluus," and an occasion of great triumph for the Czarina. Buried in flowers, after twelve recalls, the reluctant curtain at length hid her from the eyes of her adoring audience. Amid the fragrance of

the roses, some words of the sisters returned to her, and that night she sent all her white flowers to Faith to lay upon the Virgin's altar.

She was met with ecstatic joy by her child the next Sunday. After that, a careful selection from the Czarina's votive offerings found its way to the church. It was the only point at which her professional life had as yet touched that of her child's, and a new pleasure came to the Czarina in the receiving of her flowers.

One Sunday she sang Gounod's "Ave Maria" in the convent chapel. After a brief hesitation the mother superior had yielded to the little girl's pleading. The Czarina came in a soft gray gown of quiet intention, and looked like a great full-blown pink rose in the dim, austere little chapel. Her child thought of an angel singing in paradise, but the nuns were troubled with the perfume of the world.

"It is best that she should not come again," they agreed.

VI

THE Czarina sat holding her court one afternoon in Mid-Winter. It was the hour when admirers with early hours, escaped from the thraldom of the office, were wont to drop in upon her. It was seventeen years since the morning that Ellen had led her into the nursery and introduced her to her child. Seventeen years! but the Czarina's beauty had not marred nor faded with their passing. A light mind and a light heart, good health, a good temper, and a fair amount of common sense are youth-preserving cosmetics. The Czarina was not appreciably older than in the first days of her sway over youth. It was still youth to which she made her appeal, whether of years or brain. She had, therefore, a large audience in this democratic land of the easy dollar, where many grow rich, but few grow up to years of artistic sophistication.

At the Czarina's right sat one, young in years, of whom it was not yet de-

manded that he grow up in matters of taste. But in feeling he was very old—older than he would ever be again in all the years to come.

The boy was at that stage of development when the Czarina's face had realized the utmost beauty of his dreams. He had other dreams, however, and that is why he was feeling so bitterly and cynically disillusioned. He was a good boy, who had had a good home and a good mother, from both of which he was just now separated. Upon his arrival in town he had inevitably fallen prey to the Czarina's foot-light fascinations, and, having plenty of money, had vented his emotions in flowers. By an accident—which had seemed to him a miracle—he had met the Czarina. She had taken a fancy to him, and had invited him to call. He had gone, and as a result was unhappy. The Czarina had not trifled with him, but the familiarity, though it had not exactly bred contempt, had brought shock and disenchantment. The Czarina and her court were something quite different from the thing her face had meant to the boy. Yet, because he was alone in New York and a little lonely, he had continued the visits and the flowers, and wished deeply and often that the world were different, and had suffered because he could not see the cheerful Czarina in the light of a wronged angel. He was a sensible, unsentimental boy, with no taste for poetry and a good head for business.

So he sat with a frown on his fresh, good-looking young face in the Czarina's smoke-filled salon, and hated the other men and wondered why he remained.

"You never keep my flowers," he was moved to complain to the Czarina out of his general dissatisfaction—a concrete grievance suggested by the scent of a wilderness of red roses in a vase at his elbow.

The Czarina smiled a smile which he felt to be particularly sweet.

"Do you really want to know what I do with your flowers? Well—I'll tell you: I send them to my little girl at

the convent and she puts them on the altar. I have sent her my very nicest flowers for six or eight years."

The boy sat up. "Your little girl!" he stammered. "I didn't know you had one."

The Czarina knocked the ash from her cigarette. "She is a very big little girl, now," she said, and a shadow fell upon her face. "She is nearly eighteen years old. She finishes school this year."

"Eighteen years! Impossible!"

The Czarina did not even realize the spontaneous tribute. The shadow remained upon her face. "She has always been such a good little girl," she said slowly. "It is hard to have her grow up."

The boy was silent, his heart swelling with confused emotions. In the silence the door-bell rang and the next minute they both heard a girl's voice in the hall. The Czarina sprang to her feet.

"There she is now! She mustn't come in here—" She drew the astonished boy with her to the door. "Take her out with you," he heard her saying rapidly. "Anywhere—buy something—I'll fix it—just do as I tell you—"

Before they had quite reached the door it opened and the boy saw a young girl stop upon the threshold and look with startled eyes into the smoke-filled, crowded room. Somehow the Czarina wafted them both into the hall and closed the door behind her.

"Oh, Fluff dear, how sweet of you to come and surprise me! I wonder if you *could* do something for me right away this minute? I want some fresh flowers. Mr. Wilkins will show you where to get them. This is Mr. Wilkins—my daughter, Faith. Do you mind, dear? and will you hurry *right* back? Can't you find your coat, Billy?" She went over to the surprised youth, who, with confused tactful intent, had withdrawn a little from them.

"Take her to Maynard's," she told him under her breath. "Walk there and back, and give me time to get rid of this crowd."

Outside the door the boy ventured to

take a good look at the Czarina's daughter. She was the Czarina's self—with a difference; the difference of her goodness, perhaps. But then the Czarina did not look wicked any more than she looked anything else—except pink and blue and gold. The girl was pink and blue and gold also, but there was that difference: in her eyes, yes, and about her mouth. Billy met the eyes and blushed and looked away, then stole another look. The girl spoke first.

"Was mother having a party? Perhaps I oughtn't to have gone without sending her word, but I wanted to surprise her. It's the first time I ever did it."

"Oh, just some people came in," the boy muttered. He began to feel "deuced uncomfortable."

"People from the theatre, I suppose."

"Yes—er—yes. People from the theatre."

"Just think, Mr. Wilkins, I have never yet seen mother act."

"Never once?"

"I want to, awfully, but she said I mustn't till I was out of school. I have heard her sing, of course. Hasn't she a beautiful voice?"

"Well, rather." Billy could speak out comfortably there.

"And, of course, she's a great actress, too."

"I should say—great!" Billy spoke again with the fervor of genuine conviction.

"Like Mrs. Siddons and Charlotte Cushman, I suppose. I have read about them."

She had the advantage of Billy there, so he only shook his head sagely. "I guess she's about as good as they make 'em," he declared.

"And she is so good! Nathalie—that's one of the girls at the convent—she's French—she says that a great many actresses are not good. But mother is so good that I always think she must be the best woman in the world. Don't you think she looks like an angel when she is singing?"

"Sure—I mean—yes." Billy struggled for more words, but none would

come. They walked on nearly a block without speaking; then a question arose in his mind.

"You have been a lot with your mother, have you? Or she is too busy, perhaps? You are with her Summers, I s'pose?"

"No, except just for a week or so in the country, all by ourselves. I have always stayed with the sisters in the Summer. Mother has to work so hard, and often she goes to Europe to rest and get her costumes. She says perhaps she will take me this Summer when I am through school."

Billy turned troubled young eyes upon her. "It must be awfully nice and quiet at the convent. You like it there, don't you?"

"Oh, yes, I love it. But I want to travel and see the places you read about, and I want to be with mother. The sisters want me to be a nun, but somehow I'm not quite sure that I want to. Do you think it's very wicked of me?"

"Well, hardly! Good Lord, I should say not! Why, it would be wicked to shut you up in that—like that!" Suddenly he was embarrassed again by her eyes, and in that moment Billy discovered something. Faith's eyes looked the way the Czarina's eyes ought to look and didn't. She was really the thing the Czarina had seemed to him and was not.

They had reached the florist's by this time. The girl picked out pink and white roses, because, she said, they seemed like mother, and she insisted on carrying them home herself, without box or paper.

Rosy, and wind-blown, with her arms full of the roses, a bashful and now cheerful Billy in her wake, she burst in upon the Czarina sitting alone in an apartment no longer smoke-filled.

"See, mother, aren't they lovely? Do you like them?"

The Czarina rose, smiling. "Exactly what I wanted."

"May I put them in water, mother?"

"Will you, dear?" She saw the boy's eyes follow her daughter as the

girl ran into the next room. "She is pretty, isn't she?"

"Pretty!" Billy paused before the inadequacy of the adjective. "She's a stunner! Say, you'll let me come and see her sometimes, won't you?"

The Czarina gave Billy a startled look. "She is so young. She doesn't know any men yet. But—yes, I think I'll let you come sometimes, Billy."

He left when the girl came back with the roses in a vase. Faith looked up from the flowers after he was gone.

"He is very handsome, isn't he, mother?"

"Is he? Why, yes, I dare say he is a good-looking boy. Come here, Faith; I want to talk to you."

The girl looked up, startled. "Why, mother, you never called me that before!"

"You are growing up," the Czarina replied soberly. "It is time I began to call you by your real name."

"I don't like you to call me by my real name," the girl protested, clinging to her mother.

The Czarina kissed her gravely. "There comes a time for using real names, dear child."

VII

It was June, and the Czarina sat by the open window looking with unhappy, unseeing eyes into the street. It would not have seemed possible that the Czarina's smooth face could have held so much of real suffering. The hour had come at last—the hour that she had been dreading and trying to ignore all these years.

Billy, entering with an offering of outdoor Summer flowers, found her sitting there, the shadow very dark in her eyes.

"Oh, Billy!" She gave him an absent hand. "Glad to see you."

He glanced down at her. "You don't look it. What's up?"

"Oh, nothing; nothing new."

"Tell me. Maybe I could help you."

She shook her head. "It's about Faith."

"Nothing wrong with her?"

"Not with her, no." She looked up into his good, frank, sympathetic, boyish face and spoke out her trouble abruptly. "Faith graduates at the convent next week. She—has never known anything about me except that she loves me. But now—" She did not finish. After a moment she broke out again restlessly. "If I could only keep her from ever knowing. But there isn't any way. I have thought and thought, and there isn't any way. You see, everything about me and my life is so different. I have thought of letting her go into the church, but it seems a terrible thing to shut her away from life like that."

"Good Lord, yes!" cried Billy in passionate agreement.

"She might better be unhappy now and learn to hate me—" She broke off. In a moment she went on. "I would rather she married some good man, but even that won't save her from—"

"Look here," Billy interrupted, determinedly. "I came here to say something to you today. I'm not much good at saying things, but it's just this: I love Faith—of course you know that—I love her as much as anyone can love anyone else, I guess. Anyway, there's one thing I'm dead sure of: if I live to be a thousand I could never love any girl any more. I don't know just how I stand with her, but I sort of think she cares. Maybe I'm a chump to think so, but—"

The mother interrupted a little breathlessly: "Oh, Billy, but she is just a little girl! She has never known any man but you."

"I know, but you say you don't want her to get hurt by things or to get used to the theatre life, and all that. Just listen: my dad wants me to go out to China. It's an awfully good job, but I'll have to stay five years, maybe more. And if you'll let me marry Faith, if she's willing—right away now, as soon as she leaves school—we would go right out there where she wouldn't hear things for a long time, maybe not ever. You will let me speak to her,

won't you? I will be awfully good to her and—and try to deserve her."

He was the first man who had ever seen the Czarina's eyes wet.

"You're a good child, Billy. I have always liked you, but you are both so young. I don't know what's best for her. I wish I did."

"It seems as if it might be the best of two evils," observed Billy, with judicial impersonality.

The Czarina, if she had had a sense of humor, could not have smiled then. She went on with her difficult thinking. "I know some people believe in early marriages. They say when girls wait till they are older they get hard to please." She offered her simple psychology to Billy with pathetic uncertainty.

"I guess that's right," he responded cordially, feeling no reflection upon his own charms in the statement.

"I suppose it would be the best thing for her to marry someone who would be good to her and take care of her."

"I can fill that contract all right," declared Billy manfully. He felt very strong and powerful in that moment, and almost as old as in the forgotten days of his disillusion and unhappiness.

"You may take her, then," said the Czarina, "and she will go away at once

and perhaps she will never hear things against her mother till she has children of her own, and then perhaps she will be able to remember that I loved her." The Czarina hid her face. "It will be a long time before I see her again, if I ever do; and when I do, it won't ever be the same again. You must give me two weeks alone with my little girl, Billy, before you let her know she's grown up."

Billy felt something blurry about his eyes. "Sure I will," he murmured, a little thickly.

"And she has an old nurse, Ellen—I would like to have her go with her."

"Oh, I know all about Ellen. Of course she can go along," agreed Billy.

There was a silence in which Billy was oppressed with feelings for which he had no words, but finally a thought came that required expression.

"I tell you there's one thing Faith'll be dead sure of." The Czarina looked up at him doubtfully. "Why, do you think any mother could do any more than you have for her?" asked Billy.

The pain grew dark in the Czarina's eyes. "Oh, much, much more! I hate to think of that," she said.

"Why, you've just given up and given up all along the line, and I don't see that any mother can do more than that," returned Billy with conviction.



IT

HE—I got a tip that there would be a "good thing" out at the track yesterday.

SHE—And did it prove true?

"Oh, yes! I went out."



BOARDING-HOUSE KEEPER—Will you have soup tonight?

LODGER—No, thanks. I'm off the water-wagon.

SEXTON AND HIS STOWAWAY

By J. Sackville Martin

“GOOD Lord, what a hole!” Sexton, the fourth engineer, pursed his lips dolefully and whistled. It was the absence of vegetation that depressed him. And yet, in spite of the general bareness, the scene was not without beauty. Far astern, Suez lay amongst its palms, the one spot of green in all the arid landscape. To port and to starboard rose the sterile hills that shut in the gulf, long brown stretches of rock and sand below, and above, where the sunlight kissed their peaks, prismatic glories of purple and violet. The rays of the setting sun shone on the waters of the gulf, flecking the bright green carpet with points of gold; but because the scene lacked the grassy meadows, and the shade-giving foliage of his native land, Sexton whistled dolefully, and allowed a feeling of homesickness to creep upon him.

He stood by the starboard railing at the spot where it ended in the engineers' cabins. These cabins had been built out on the after-part of the centre-castle, and were separated from the main deck-structures and from the door of the engine-room by an alleyway. Sexton was a tall, weedy-looking youth, narrow-chested and stooping at the shoulders. Habitual carelessness about his appearance led him to wear his hair too long. A lock fell across his forehead almost to his eyes—light-blue eyes with a dreamy look in them—the eyes of a sentimentalist. And a sentimentalist he was. In his cabin, the most conspicuous object was a photograph tacked against the wall—the photograph of a girl, in an evening

gown of a type that betrayed its cheapness even in the reproduction. Sexton was not in love with the original of the picture; but long ago he had been, and he liked to imagine that his passion still survived. He would stand and gaze at the photograph for minutes together as though hypnotized by its beauty. Then he would sit down and draw a long box of japanned metal from underneath his bunk, and open it to look reverently upon a uniform of blue and gold and an elaborate sword that rested upon it. He would take up the sword, draw it from its scabbard, and as far as the limited space at his command permitted him, would go through several desperate passes at an imaginary enemy. On board the *S. S. Flamborough* there was little use for that uniform, and none at all for the sword. Both pertained to the naval reserve, of which the engineer was a member. There was little to indicate any connection between the photograph and the uniform, and yet it was to be found in the sentimentalism of Sexton's character. Love for a girl, and love of his country were, he fondly hoped, the two guiding stars of his existence.

Seven bells had struck some moments before, and with a sigh he prepared to descend into the engine-room. As he stepped inside the hatch the roar of the machinery wrapped him round and he looked down from above into the moving mass of steel and iron that toiled ceaselessly to send the vessel on her way. The hot reek of oil rose around him, the clanging of the engines dinned in his ears, and the roughened iron foot-plates beneath his

feet sweated in the damp heat. A long ladder of steel rungs, guarded by a hand-rail led him into the depths. As he stepped upon it his dreams departed, crushed by the practical nature of his surroundings. Sexton, the hero, fled away, leaving Sexton, the junior engineer of the *S. S. Flamborough*, a merchant vessel of two thousand tons, trading in general cargo to commonplace ports of the East.

At the foot of the ladder he was greeted by Taylor, the third engineer, whom he had come to relieve—a young man, not unlike him in general appearance, but the possessor of a hard blue eye, very different in expression from his own—an eye that denoted a practical, hard-headed owner with little interests outside his work and little relaxation beyond an occasional spree on shore. He nodded to Sexton and wiped the perspiration from his forehead.

"Glad you've come," he said shortly. "It's jolly hot down here."

"It'll be hotter in a day or two," answered Sexton. "You wait until you get into the Red Sea before you howl about it."

He spoke with authority; for Taylor had come from an Atlantic steamer and had never before made the Eastern trip. Presently he turned to the ladder.

"I wish to God this trip were over," grumbled Sexton, as he watched his fellow preparing to depart. "I wish we were back on shore. I'm hanged if I know why anyone comes to sea. Day in, day out, nothing to do but to kick one's heels and take one's spell at the engine-room. Those on land don't know when they're well off. They're not stuck down on square yards of deck. One might as well be in prison."

Taylor had heard this sort of thing before.

"There are plenty of landsmen," he said concisely, "that would be glad to change places with you. They look on the sea as the real life of adventure."

"Shows how much they know about

it," said his junior. "It's work, work, work—nothing but work!"

"Well, what more do you want?" said the third. "You'd have to work on shore, wouldn't you? It's simply a choice between an office and an engine-room. This is good enough for me."

He started to climb up the ladder, but stopped half-way.

"Take a look at the condenser," he called over his shoulder. "The chief asked me to see to it, but I hadn't time. There's eight bells. So long!"

Left to himself, Sexton looked around him at the complicated mechanism of the engine-room. Regularly, as though it were part of some gigantic clock, and its function were to mark the time, the big connecting-rod swung downward with a force behind each thrust that seemed sufficient to knock the bottom out of the ship. Beside it, the eccentrics rubbed their well oiled surfaces together as a man rubs his palms when well pleased. Even so, they appeared to be expressing satisfaction with the manner in which they were performing their duties. Here and there a half-naked Chinaman moved to and fro, oiling and polishing. High aloft, through the skylight, a pale gleam of the fast-dying daylight came down with a hint of a calmer world above.

All this Sexton watched for a time. Then he picked his way along the narrow iron foot-plates in the direction of the condenser. His path led him to the port side of the engine-room and along a little blind passage. At the extreme end of this passage, his eyes fell upon a piece of sackcloth, loosely thrown down as though to cover some kind of a bundle. He flung a careless glance at it, wondering vaguely what it could be and what it was doing there. He stooped and laid hands on it, and a moment later he started back in surprise; for his action had aroused something living, beneath the sackcloth, and he found himself, to his astonishment, looking straight into the eyes of a girl.

She was a very pretty girl, too, with

something foreign in her appearance. A pair of blue eyes looked straight into his with an expression in which vague alarm mingled with actual dismay. Her hair was curly, and was gathered at the back of her head into a short plait. Even in the dim light of the lantern that hung behind him he was able to make out that her face, though not beautiful, was strangely attractive. Her features were not regular; her nose was too retroussé, her lips too thick to satisfy his ideas of perfection. But her complexion was very clear, and there was in her expression an appeal, confiding in its very childishness, that disarmed anger and invited compassion.

She was simply dressed in a red-cotton blouse, open at the neck, revealing the white column of her throat, and a blue serge skirt. She sat up, supporting herself upon one arm, and looked at him without speaking.

Sexton had never been remarkable for much fluency of expression. Like most dreamers, an emergency took him at a disadvantage. For a moment, in the face of his discovery he was silent, and when he did speak it was a very commonplace remark that acted as a safety-valve to his feelings.

"Well!" he said, "here's a rum go."

But the girl's alarm touched him. He hastened to reassure her.

"I say," he said hastily, "don't be frightened. I'm not going to eat you. I only want to know what you are doing here?"

"You will not harm me?" the girl said. "You will not give me up!"

She spoke in English, but with a foreign accent. A little pucker of anxiety marked her forehead.

"Give you up?" said the bewildered engineer. "Give you up to whom? What have you been doing? Why are you here?"

"To my Government," she answered. "I am Russe, you understand. I have escaped from a Russian ship. I am educated; I am a student. That is why they wish to arrest me. This is an English ship, is it not? Very well, I wish to go to England. You will take

me there? I have been in your England. I have friends there."

"Where did you come on board of us?" asked Sexton.

"At Port Said," answered the girl readily. "I came in the Russian ship from Odessa. I wished to get to England, and I saw your ship. But I had no money, so I hid here."

Sexton whistled. "Wanted to get to England, did you?" he said. "Great snakes, you're on the wrong boat, this time! We're not going to England at all. We're only a fortnight out, and we're for Hong Kong with a cargo of rails. This is a rum go, and no mistake!"

The girl's face fell. Then her brow cleared and an expression of resigned complacency took possession of her features.

"You do not go to England?" she said. "Ah, well, never mind. At least I am safe under the English flag. Is it not so? Britons never shall be slaves, eh? You see I have learned that in your England. I will go with you to Hong Kong. You will not let my Government take me?"

"That depends," said Sexton cautiously, "that depends on what you have been doing. You haven't been shooting anyone, or blowing any one up, or doing any tricks like that, have you?"

He grinned as he realized the incongruity of such deeds with the childish face before him. To the girl, however, there seemed nothing incongruous in his question.

"No," she said seriously; "I have many times wished to do so but I have not had the chance."

"Oh," said Sexton, his grin becoming a trifle feeble, "you have many times wished to do so, have you? Well, there's nothing like frankness. How did you get on board?"

"I hid in a boat. I br-r-ibed an Arab to take me. And now I am here, I am safe, eh? You would not let them search for me?"

"Search for you?" Sexton whistled once more. "I say," he remarked, "you seem to be rather an important young person, don't you?"

She stood up and drew herself to her full insignificant height.

"I am very important," she said. "I am a socialist. They do not like socialists in Russia."

"By George, I don't wonder," exclaimed Sexton ungallantly. "I mean," he corrected hastily, "we've got one socialist on board, already—Cheeseman, our second engineer—a rum chap, if you like. If they'd turned him out of Russia, or any other self-respecting country, I could have understood it. You and he might hit it off together. But that's not the question just now. What am I going to do with you? I ought to report you to the captain."

Her face expressed a renewal of her alarm.

"Oh, no!" she cried. "You must not do so. He would be angry with me for hiding on board his ship."

"Very possible," admitted Sexton; "but he'd be still more angry if he found out that I was hiding you."

"But he would give me up!" she cried. "You shall not. You must hide me."

Sexton pondered. He stood at the fork where different roads branched off to duty and pleasure. On the one hand, duty was plain enough to see; on the other, inclination beckoned him along in the direction of romance.

"Lie down again and cover yourself up," he said at last. "I'll think it over. At the end of the watch, I'll let you know what I have decided to do."

All through his watch he pondered the question, but the more he thought over it, the greater became his irresolution. The path of duty was simple enough, but he knew very well that had he meant to follow it, he would have acted promptly and would not have permitted himself to discuss the situation at all. On the other hand, the path of heroism—surely the helping of young girls in distress involved heroism—presented considerable risks. In the event of his determination to conceal this girl, how long would he be able to do it? The *Flamborough* coaled at Perim, and it might be possible to get

her ashore at that port. If so, it would involve a concealment of little more than four days, a thing that was possible if he could persuade some other person on board the ship to share in the adventure. Without such collusion he had no chance at all. A two-thousand ton steamer presents little opportunity for concealing a stowaway. The most promising place was, of course, the chain locker, but for its use it was necessary to obtain the co-operation of the carpenter, and he had had a row with "Chips" only two days before. Next in desirability was his own cabin; but if he gave that up, where should he put himself? A vague idea of giving out that he had the smallpox, and getting the doctor to isolate him in the lazarette, occurred to him; but he abandoned it, as he had not yet taken the measure of the ship's doctor, a callow youth, fresh from his examinations, who was not likely to be sufficiently steeped in crime to give a false certificate. So the watch wore on, and he realized that he had come to no conclusions save that for the present he did not intend to report to the captain. Under the circumstances, the first thing to be done was to get the girl, unobserved, to his cabin. When that was accomplished he could work out the details of his future course.

As the hour neared a quarter of midnight, and seven bells struck, he went round the condenser and once more roused the girl. She sat up.

"See here," he said, "I suppose you don't want me to give you up?"

"No, no!" she replied quickly. "Your captain would be angry. I wish that you shall hide me."

"It's all very well," he retorted. "You seem to think it's easy, but it isn't. I can't hide you more than four days at the outside. By that time we shall reach Perim, and when we get there, you'll have to get ashore and find another ship that is going to England. You ought to manage it easily enough, judging by the way you jumped us. Now if I do my best to hide you until we reach Perim, will you promise to do just what I tell you,

and show yourself nowhere about the ship?"

"Of course I will," she said superbly. "I place myself in your hands."

"You see, there's a lot to be thought of," he explained, pleased by her ready obedience. "There are some Russian cruisers about here, stopping traffic. Suppose they come here to search—what then?"

"I shall be hidden," she said quickly. "I will not fall into their hands alive. If they find me, you shall kill me."

Her eyes flashed and her cheeks glowed. Sexton thought of his revolver, and decided that this was refreshingly near the real thing.

"That settles it," he said valiantly. "I won't let them take you. Get up and come along with me."

"Where do you go?" she asked, rising.

"To my cabin," he replied. "I must get you there first. Then we'll think over what is to be done."

She followed him without a word to the foot of the engine-room ladder. The Chinamen looked at the pair inscrutably, but Sexton did not trouble himself about them. They would say nothing except among themselves as they lay in the fo'castle of an evening, playing fan-tan under the lazy wreaths of opium smoke. His principal concern was that Cheeseman, the second engineer, might come down before eight bells had struck, or that the chief himself might wish to pay a surprise visit. His best chance lay in speed and he went up the ladder at a quick pace, looking around to see if the girl was following him.

She climbed with amazing agility and stood on the foot-plates just inside the engine-room door, wiping the oil from her hands with a little grimace of disgust.

"How dirty it is!" she said. "Pah! How dirty!"

"Keep your mouth shut," whispered Sexton, anxiety overcoming his natural politeness. "Do you want the whole ship to hear us?"

The girl laid a finger on her lips to show that she understood, and Sexton

stepped cautiously out into the alley-way. All was quiet. In each end of the passage a purple space of sky was inlaid with bright points by a few of the larger stars, and fore and aft the white cabins shone under the moonlight like ghosts of themselves born of the unreality of the hour. Sexton, however, had neither time nor inclination to realize the beauty of the scene. Seizing the girl by the wrist, he drew her rapidly across the alley-way and pushed her into his cabin. Then, closing the door upon her, he leaned against it, looking around suspiciously at the shadows, fearful lest they might conceal some lurking creature.

Eight bells. Looking forward, he saw the second officer come out of his cabin and mount the bridge to keep the middle watch. But no sound disturbed the quiet of Cheeseman's apartment. Sexton moved softly toward the door and listened. He had at that moment no compunction in eavesdropping. With his ear to the door he became aware of a whining voice, exclaiming to itself in a sort of melancholy monotone.

"Do you see this?" whined the voice. "Oh, hell! Do you see this?"

"At his blessed books again," said Sexton to himself in disgust.

"In London alone," continued the voice, "five hundred thousand people are starving in want and misery. Five hundred thousand. Oh, hell!"

Sexton knocked at the door.

"Cheeseman! Cheeseman!" he cried. "Eight bells! Wake up!"

The sound of a heavy body falling from the bunk to the floor was succeeded by scuffling movements that indicated that the second engineer was making his toilet. Sexton tried the door, but without success. Cheeseman, with a truly socialistic distrust of his fellow creatures, invariably kept his cabin locked.

A moment later the door was opened from the inside and the second engineer stood revealed in the light of his cabin. He was a thin, hatchet-faced man whose pale face glistened with the oil and sweat that he had neglected to remove after his last watch. A blue flannel

shirt, open at the neck, revealed glimpses of a hairy chest. His trousers were rolled well above his knees, and a pair of faded yellow socks hung down disconsolately over carpet-slippers. In his mouth he held the corner of a piece of oil-smearred cotton waste which he sucked from time to time as though in an effort to derive nourishment from the grease which it contained. He stared at Sexton a moment and then removed the waste from his mouth in order to allow himself to speak.

"I was just coming," he said. "You haven't left the engine-room alone, have you?"

"Just this minute," said Sexton, suddenly aware of his delinquency. "I thought you weren't coming. Eight bells sounded five minutes ago."

"You ought to have sent a Chinaman," grumbled Cheeseman.

"The fact is, prevaricated Sexton, "I had to come up. I felt a bit faint down there. It's as hot as—well, as you know where."

Cheeseman glanced at him scornfully.

"I know what you mean," he sneered. "Not that I believe it, mind you," he broke out with extraordinary vehemence. "There is no hell. There couldn't be a hell. It's impossible. It wouldn't be allowed. Mind that."

"I'll think it over," replied Sexton drily, well aware of the strength of his companion's convictions upon this subject. Just at present he felt that he had things of more importance to attend to than the discussion of the problems of futurity. "Anyhow, if there is," he went on, "it can't be much worse than that engine-room."

"I tell you, it's impossible," insisted Cheeseman warmly. "The thing's irreconcilable with the idea of a merciful Creator. There is no hell. You can take it from me."

As though he had settled the question once and for all, he closed the door behind him and made for the engine-room hatch. Sexton called after him.

"What is it?" said Cheeseman, turning viciously. "Do you think that I've got all night to stand here while you talk? It's my watch."

"I want to speak to you when you come up," said Sexton quickly. "I want your advice."

Mr. Cheeseman had a weakness for giving advice. He nodded acquiescence.

"All right," he said sharply, "when I come up."

He disappeared into the engine-room, leaving Sexton staring after him.

II

ONCE safely inside his cabin, Sexton devoted himself to learning more about his guest. Seated in his bunk, with his legs swinging over the sides, he conversed with the young girl who occupied the settee, speaking in low tones, lest a chance passer-by might overhear him, and now and again holding a finger to his lips to remind her that she must do the same.

As he listened he had a sensation of a life opening itself before him, very strange, and differing from anything he had ever known. Her name, she told him, was Vera Dobrova. Her father, the son of a peasant, had been driven from home by the cruelty of his parents, and while still a boy, had come to Odessa to starve or to rise, as the Fates might determine. He had learned to read and to write, he had educated himself, and he had never forgotten the sense of power that these accomplishments had given him. As he made his way in the world and married, he had sworn that his children, should he be blessed with them, should be better equipped in this respect than he had been, and Vera had received a good education. Three years before, when she was a girl of sixteen, she had been sent to England on a visit to a political friend of her father, a refugee who had sent him glowing accounts of the freedom enjoyed by the subjects of that realm. On her return to Russia, she had found her father actively engaged in the distribution of socialistic propaganda among the masses. He seemed careworn and spoke very little and was much abroad in the evenings. Then,

the war with Japan had broken out, uprisings had followed, the police had become more active, and there had come a night when he had furnished her with money, escorted her secretly to the harbor and put her on board a ship for Port Said, telling her to get back to England by whatever means she could. What had happened to him afterward, she did not know and had no means of knowing. Her money had been stolen from her during the voyage. She did not know who had taken it; only that she had slept with it under her pillow, and in the morning it was gone.

Sexton listened with wonder and an immense respect for a girl whose existence had been so full of adventure. He could not help contrasting the humdrum lines of his own uneventful existence with her experiences, and as her story progressed, he became less and less inclined to follow the common-sense course and report her presence to the captain. It seemed to him that his life, converging on hers, had become tinted with some of the color in which her story was so rich, had suddenly entered into regions that were not commonplace. He looked forward with positive pleasure to the prospect of concealing her as far as Perim, and only regretted that it was not feasible to take her further. However, four days of excitement lay before him, and he bent his mind to the problems that confronted it.

"I shall have to tell someone," he said confidentially, "and, on the whole, I think that Cheeseman is the best. He's a socialist himself, you see. If I'm to give this cabin up to you, I shall have to bunk somewhere, and if I can get him to see the thing in the proper light I shall be able to share his room."

"But why?" she expostulated, "why should you tell him? I can stay here, can I not? And why should you give up your cabin?"

"Why? Oh, come! You're too young!" Sexton said no more, but a healthy blush overspread his features.

The girl laughed. "Do you know,

my friend," she said, looking at him with a suspicion of mirth in her blue eyes, "that you are younger than I am? Oh, yes. I do not count your years, I was not thinking of them. But you are younger than I am, all the same—fresher, as you English say; greener, is it not?"

Sexton was redder now, with vexation as well as embarrassment.

"Look here," he burst out, "if you're going to say things like that, you must make up your mind to pay for them. I'd be glad if you wouldn't forget that I'm here to protect you; and you might have the common decency not to insult me."

"But I never meant to insult you," she protested with raised eyebrows. "I would not do such a thing for the world. And you could not think otherwise than you do. Ah! I know your England where you are all peaceful and happy, eh? And you have time to think of these things, of what you call 'the proprieties,' is it not? But if you had lived as I have lived, you would know that life has no time for such things; they do not matter, they are of no importance."

She spoke earnestly and with a shadow on her brow. Sexton was conscious in some way that he was learning a lesson from one who had a lesson to teach.

"I say," he said slowly, "I believe I could pick up a lot from you—about life, you know. I often wonder what it was for, and why we were made to waste it on a round of trifles, of little things, things that don't matter. I like to hear you say that these things are of no importance. I've thought so myself. Well, now, what *is* of importance?"

"Surely it is to make people happy," she said, with tears in her eyes. "Surely it is to keep want and misery from the doors of the people; to teach them that they may think for themselves. That is, to give them life; and in Russia, to give them life is to live oneself not very far from death."

"You want to make people happy," he said slowly. "And yet when they

are happy they will become as we are in England—busy with the trifles, the little things you laughed at only a moment ago. And you call that life? Why, one day of your danger would be worth a whole year of such happiness."

"One day," she said, "one day of cold fear, of terror!" Her face was gray with recollection. "Ah, my friend, you do not know—you cannot. Be thankful that you cannot. But laugh at you?" She smiled charmingly, and the young man's resentment vanished in admiration. "You are my friend. And you are right to be careful about the proprieties. In England, you think much of them, I know. Oh, yes, my friends would not let me go about there without a man or a very old woman. They did not think me fit to take care of myself. Whereas in Russia—at least I go about as I please."

"Did you go about there with a man?" asked Sexton jealously.

"But yes," she retorted, "when there was a man to go about with. I knew many men—many very nice men who had the cause of our people at heart. They talked to me of many things."

"As I am talking to you now?" said Sexton unpleasantly.

"Not at all," she said quickly. "They spoke to me of serious things, of our cause—not foolish things. I do not mean that you are foolish, but—you know what I mean."

She was a creature of moods. Before he had time to answer, she had jumped up and was inspecting the photograph that was nailed to the wall.

"Who is this?" she demanded. "Your sweetheart, is it not? The young lady with whom you walk out? Is not that what they say in England?"

"There are people who say it," replied Sexton lamely. "It's scarcely considered the correct thing, you know."

"Oh, but you are wrong," she cried. "I am sure that you are wrong. My friends had a servant, and she showed me the photograph of the young gentleman with whom she walked out. Now, if one walks out with a young gentle-

man, why should you not walk out with a young lady?"

"No earthly reason why I shouldn't," said Sexton, "but I shouldn't call her a young lady; I should call her a girl. And she wouldn't call me a young gentleman; she would call me a 'feller.'"

"But you are not gentlemen and ladies, then?" she asked. "Ah, but perhaps you also are a socialist, and for you all are equal. Is it not so? And for you there can be no ladies and gentlemen?"

Sexton felt that he was getting out of his depth, and paused. During the pause the young Russian inspected the photograph with little bird-like movements of her head, now drawing back from it, now peering into it with all the enthusiasm of a connoisseur over a valuable oil-painting.

"And so you would call her your 'girl,' then?" she said at last. "She is pretty."

"You think so?" asked Sexton, gratified by this testimony to his good taste.

She pursed up her lips and nodded her head at him energetically.

"Very pretty," she said with emphasis.

There was something very piquant in her bright glances, and Sexton stared at her, open-mouthed.

"She is not as pretty as you are," he said with conviction.

She laughed.

"Oh, you must not say that!" she cried. "Me, I have no time to be pretty. For me there are other things in life, more serious things. I do not wish to be pretty."

"But you can't help it," said Sexton devoutly. "You see, you were made so."

"Do not let us talk of it, at any rate," she said, dismissing the subject with a little wave of her hand. "It is of no importance."

But to Sexton the topic was grateful, and he enlarged upon it. They spoke in low tones, and the night wore slowly away. The fresh breeze of the morning blew into the cabin, and one star,

paling to its disappearance, framed itself in the circle of the port-hole. Sexton recollected that the morning watch was set and that the second engineer would now be in his cabin. He rose.

"I must be off now and see Cheeseman," he said. "You stay here and keep very quiet until I come back again. I'm going to lock you in, lest anyone should come."

She nodded and he stepped out upon the deck, closing the door behind him cautiously.

III

EMBARRASSMENT descended upon him as he stood outside Cheeseman's door, and it was a moment before he could make up his mind to knock. His project of hiding the girl had seemed reasonable enough so long as he was not called upon to share it with anyone; but now that he was about to do so, it presented itself as the maddest of lunacies, and he was half-inclined to temporize with Cheeseman and go straight to the captain. But the unpractical, romance-loving side of his nature rose in revolt and urged him once more along the path he had mapped out for himself; and with a beating heart he tapped upon the door. Even then, had Cheeseman delayed in opening, he might have fled, but in a moment the door was flung back and the second engineer confronted him.

"Oh, it's you!" said Cheeseman morosely, sucking at his piece of oil waste. "What do you want?"

"I have something to tell you," said Sexton anxiously. "May I come in?"

Cheeseman drew back from the doorway, allowing him to enter. Sexton closed the door. He sat down upon the horsehair settee and looked about him. In all essentials the cabin was a counterpart of his own, but it was characterized by an extreme disorder. Garments in various stages of decay were littered about the floor, lying where they had been thrown off. The bunk was heaped with books. As he glanced

around him he became aware of his host's eye fixed upon him suspiciously, and he plunged nervously into the tale.

"The fact is," he said hastily, "I find it a bit difficult to begin."

He paused for sympathy and realized that he would get none.

"If you don't begin," said Cheeseman, removing his oil-rag, "you are not likely to finish."

The truth of this remark was so obvious that it spurred Sexton to immediate narration. In stammering language he related his discovery during the evening watch, and he went on to give some explanation of his proposed course of action. Cheeseman listened silently, sucking once more at his piece of oil-waste.

"You always were a young ass," he remarked when the narrative had come to its end.

"I didn't come here to be told that," said Sexton sharply.

"No," was the dry reply. "It wasn't necessary."

There was a pause instinct with bad feeling.

"What wages do you get?" asked Cheeseman abruptly.

"You know as well as I do," retorted Sexton. "Eight pounds a month."

"And your keep," added Cheeseman.

"And my keep, of course."

"Ah! I get fifteen."

It was on Sexton's tongue to remark that his superior, on such wages, owed it both to himself and to the ship to look a little less like a rag-and-bone merchant. But the feeling that to do so would scarcely further the end he had in view, and the consciousness that he did not quite understand the drift of Cheeseman's questions kept him silent.

"Good wages," said Cheeseman, after a pause. "You'll not get too many berths as good. You'll not find many ships where the food is as good. You'll leave a home when you leave this ship."

"Who's talking of leaving it?" retorted Sexton.

"You are," said Cheeseman. "When the captain finds out what you're

doing, you'll get the order of the golden boot. You'll hang about the shipping-offices waiting for a new berth, and you'll not get one. Then you'll take to drink. Then you'll become one of the army of cadgers loafing for coppers. Then the folk will get sick of giving you coppers, and you'll starve. You'll starve as many better men who *don't* deserve it, are starving at this moment. Oh, hell, yes! How many!"

There were whole depths of gloom in his tone, and Sexton was discouraged.

"But what I can't make out," went on Cheeseman with ever-increasing moroseness, "is this: Why, having decided to chuck away your berth, do you want me to throw up mine? I'm not one of your toffs. I haven't a home and friends, if you have. I started as a fireman, I did; and I had to work my way up. I read and learned and had a hard time doing it. I wasn't kept at college by my blazing papa. I got nothing from him but kicks, and he didn't live until I was big enough to give them back to him. And you want me to chuck a berth like this because of your idiotic folly. Now, why? Why did you select me? If you were looking for a fool, why did you pitch on me out of the whole confounded crew? That's what I want to know."

"No, but really," protested Sexton, "I didn't think you'd see it like this. Hang it, man, this girl is a socialist. And I thought you were one, too. I thought you believed in helping people in trouble, and all that sort of thing. I've heard you gas about it now and then. Well, here's a chance for you."

"A fat lot you're going to help her," sneered Cheeseman, "hiding her in your cabin and shooting her ashore at Perim and telling her to shift for herself. Now, if you just act sensibly and report to the captain—and if you won't I will—she'll have a comfortable berth in the pilot's cabin and be taken on to Columbo and put in charge of the British consul."

"No, but look here," protested Sexton, "if the skipper knows she's on board there will be the deuce to pay if we fall in with one of these Russian

cruisers. Hang it, man, they're knocking about the Red Sea a bit further down. Who's to say that they won't search us? Who's to say that they're not looking for her? You wouldn't like her to fall into the Russian government's hands?"

He spoke warmly, the romantic possibilities of the situation appealing strongly to his imagination. At that moment he was rescuing a distressed princess from Siberia, the knout and all the other terrors of Russia as seen through the eyes of the sixpenny sensational novelist.

But his argument, far-fetched and feeble as it was, appealed strongly to the second engineer. As he listened a rush of blood surged into his pale face, and even suffused the whites of his eyes. He clenched his fist tightly and banged his hand upon the edge of the bunk.

"The Russian Government!" he said hoarsely. "No, the swine!" He grabbed savagely at a dirty book that lay on the bunk, and opened it. "Look here," he cried, "I've been reading about them. They're worse than our South African Jews. They're worse than American millionaires. There's something in what you say, Sexton. Perhaps, as long as we're in the Red Sea, and are liable to be stopped, it would be better to keep her hidden. The skipper wouldn't like to give her up to them, but he might have to."

Sexton was gratified and encouraged, and allowed his imagination more rope.

"She really is important," he said. "They're most anxious to get hold of her. She has secret information of some sort." He paused, aware of his inability to manufacture it. "And she's like you, you know," he continued. "She doesn't like governments. She wants to blow things up. You ought to be glad to help her."

"Well, I'm not going to lose my job over it, anyway," said Cheeseman, sobering a little. "One fool on board the ship is enough, and more than enough. If you want to share this cabin, you can. But, remember, you haven't told me anything, and I don't know anything."

You've come into this cabin because I've taken a fancy to your company; or, as that's rather unlikely, because you've taken a fancy to mine. You understand? A nod is as good as a wink to a blind horse."

"Won't you see her?" entreated Sexton.

"No, I won't," said Cheeseman decidedly. "I won't see her and I won't have anything to do with her. If you want to come in here, you can. Don't go littering the place up—that's all I ask."

Sexton glanced scornfully about the cabin, but checked his hasty comment.

"All right," he said; "I understand. You're a decent sort, Cheeseman."

"You ought to think me so," was the reply, "for I'm almost as big a fool as you are."

Sexton returned to his cabin. Romance was still with him, but its gilded armor had been somewhat damaged by his superior's comments. At his entrance, Vera started up from the settee, and looked at him inquiringly.

"It's all right," he said. "I can share Cheeseman's cabin and you can have this. You are safe enough until we get to Perim. When we do, we'll talk further."

He was going on, but stopped suddenly to stare out at the port-hole. Framed in its circle, about half a mile away, a torpedo-boat was running down the Red Sea, going two knots to the *Flamborough's* one. The waves broke in a long roll from her bows, and the blue saltire cross stretched out upon the breeze from her stern.

"Look!" he cried, pointing. "Look! a Russian torpedo-boat."

The girl sprang to the port-hole, her eyes blazing.

"Pigs!" she cried, "pigs!" She shut her teeth firmly and her eyes sparkled. "Do you think that they will stop us?" she asked fiercely.

Sexton experienced something of a shock as he realized that this girl hated her country, or at least the flag that was her country's emblem. He could not help contrasting with her exhibition of hatred the feelings inspired within

him by the sight of the dear old Union Jack. It brought home to him her loneliness, and it was with an increase of pity that he answered her.

"I don't think they will stop us—not when they're going at that speed. They seem to be off on a message somewhere."

Together they watched the torpedo-boat forge ahead, and when Sexton turned from the port-hole he drew a long breath of satisfaction. His barque of life was launched at length upon deep waters.

IV

GREEN, the third officer, turned to the quartermaster and took the wheel from him.

"Go down and tell the captain we're almost up to the *Dædalus*," he said shortly.

The man nodded and left the bridge. The mate gripped the spokes of the wheel and spun them slightly. It was half-past seven in the evening, and the sun was still high above the African hills which lay along the western horizon in jagged masses of purple. Nearer in, about four points on the starboard bow, a lighthouse rose out of the water, and from its base a long elliptic of breakers marked the *Dædalus* shoal, its reef just awash with the crawling foam. To an imaginative mind, there was something very cruel in the way the waves swept over the coral; something in the shape of the reef unpleasantly suggestive of a shark's jaw, armed with white teeth. And the lighthouse, too, looked very lonely, standing straight up from the sea without so much as a foot of rock outside the tower whereon its inhabitants might place their feet. But Green was not imaginative. He had seen the place many times before; and it was not because he needed help, but merely in obedience to a standing order that he had sent for the captain. A moment later the quartermaster came on the bridge again and took the wheel; and the mate walked over to the starboard side

of the bridge to look at the fast-nearing reef.

A bell rang clearly from the fo'castle head. It was a sign that the look-out man had seen a ship. The bell rang phonetically according to the number of syllables in the call; once for "port," twice for "starboard," three times for "right ahead." On this occasion it rang twice, and the mate went into the chart-house and returned with a long telescope. He propped it against the bridge railing, and applied his eye to it. A black spot, surmounted by a trail of smoke, leaped into the glass as a ship with three masts and two funnels. She was square-rigged on the foremast, and he whistled as he marked her lines. He had just put the telescope down again, when the captain appeared on the bridge.

Captain Crampton was a short, stout man, with a bristling mustache. He was about fifty years of age, a bachelor and an autocrat. In default of power to add cubits to his stature, he had cultivated a manner that added whole miles to his dignity. He had the art, possessed by many of his fellows, of being severely unapproachable, and when he was ill or out of temper the whole ship knew it.

He replied to the mate's salute with a careless wave of his hand. He cast a glance at the lighthouse and the reef, marked the ship's position, and went into the chart-house. The mate followed him, to find him bending over the chart with a pencil and a pair of compasses. He waited respectfully until the skipper raised his head, before he spoke.

"There's a steamer, hull down, on the starboard bow, sir," he said.

Captain Crampton grunted.

"What's she doing out there?" he asked. "She's out of the track."

The mate had his suspicions, but knew better than to hazard them before he was asked.

"Can you make her out?" said the skipper at last. "What is she?"

"Nothing regular about here, sir," answered the mate. "Three masts, two black funnels and a clipper bow.

Might be a converted Russian volunteer boat."

Captain Crampton swore profusely.

"Good Lord!" he said, "the brutes seem to think they own this sea. There was the *Malacca* the other day, and now they may stop us. If I had my way"—he brought his fist heavily down upon the table—"I'd send a couple of first-class cruisers here and sweep the seas clear of them. What's the use of the British flag if every fiddle-nosed pirate that can keep out of the way of a Japanese ship is free to stop and search us at his own free will?"

He marched out on the bridge and took up the telescope.

"Bearing south by east," he grunted, "she'll come across us."

"I was wondering," suggested the mate tentatively, "whether that torpedo-boat that we saw yesterday morning had any message for her. It looked like it from the way she was traveling."

"Well, it's nothing to do with us," said the captain. "Rails for Hong Kong aren't contraband, and the manifest is clear enough. Call me when we get near her."

He took another look at the offending ship and left the bridge, muttering to himself.

Left alone, the third officer amused himself from time to time by taking occasional observations of the stranger. To the seaman anything that causes a break in the long monotony of the days is welcome, and beyond that, there is a certain excitement in the sight of ships of war. Even in time of peace, they suggest a potential force that attracts the attention and stimulates the imagination. How much more so, in the actual hour of war! The mate kept his telescope busy to such an extent that he attracted the attention of Taylor, the third engineer, who stood on the starboard side of the centre-castle, looking up at the bridge, marvelling what was engaging the mate's attention.

Green, turning round, saw him, and called out to him:

"Heya, there, Taylor! just nip into the doctor's cabin will you, and send

him up? There's a Russian cruiser about and he wouldn't like to miss it."

The news spread about the ship, and very shortly a little knot of men gathered by the starboard railing, looking out curiously at the steamer that was nearing them. Down in the engine-room, Sexton toiled in blissful unconsciousness of the approaching danger. He was not destined to be left in peace very long. Down the ladder came Taylor, in wild excitement, shouting his news as he came.

"I say, Sexton," he cried, "here's a go! There's a Russian cruiser about five miles ahead. Stand by to stop her when the skipper rings down."

Sexton was aware that his heart thumped suddenly against his side.

"Nonsense," he stammered. "What should they want to stop us for? We're not going to Japan."

"Well, you'll see," said Taylor. "Don't say I didn't warn you," and went up the ladder faster than he had come down.

Sexton returned to his work. Although he realized that the situation was not wanting in the romantic possibilities for which he had thirsted, he became aware that it was scarcely so enjoyable as he had anticipated. The fear of discovery was upon him, and he started nervously as he glanced from time to time at the indicator. When, at length, the bell rang and the finger on the dial swung round to "stop," he experienced the feelings of a criminal on the drop. He pulled the lever sharply, and in a few moments the throbbing of the engines had ceased and no sound was audible but the faint hiss of escaping steam and the clang of the iron shovels as the firemen raked the coal to and fro in the furnaces.

V

On the *Flamborough's* bridge, the captain stood among his officers. The Russian ship lay not more than a couple of cable-lengths away, and from her bow floated the little puff of smoke that told of the shot that had brought the

Flamborough to a standstill. Captain Crampton was furiously indignant. He strove vainly to find fitting language to express his feelings; and it was merely the inadequacy of his repertoire that kept him silent. Like most seamen who sail under the red ensign he had a sovereign contempt for all foreigners; and this contempt was accentuated where the Russians were concerned, a race whom he had never regarded as being at home upon the sea. To be stopped when on his lawful course by one of the ships of the despised nation was an insult that rankled—the more so because he found himself utterly helpless before it.

He kept his eyes steadily on the Russian ship. She was a large steamer, three-masted and two-funnelled, with the clipper bow and square-rigged foremast characteristic of the Volunteer fleet. Two or three six-inch guns that poked their muzzles over the bulwark were all that indicated that she was more than a peaceful merchantman. The blue saltire cross floated lazily from her stern, and near her bows her name was set forth in gold lettering of the Russian character. The fact that he was unable to make out the name was a fresh source of annoyance to the captain, and he scoffed with insular pride at people who did not know enough to use what he called ordinary civilized lettering.

He turned to Morley, the first officer, a fresh-complexioned man who twisted a fair mustache between his fingers.

"I can't make her infernal name out," he muttered. "Can you read their lingo, Morley?"

"No, sir," said the mate, touching his cap, "but she'll be the *Ladoga*, I guess. I heard at Port Said that she was down here. They are lowering a boat. Shall I get the gangway down?"

"I suppose you'd better," assented the captain ungraciously. "They can't touch us. The sooner they're on board, and the sooner they get off again, the better. We're likely to waste an hour or two, as it is."

Morley left the bridge to attend to his duty. A boat had dropped from

the davits of the Russian, and, manned by two officers and a crew, it came over the water toward the *Flamborough*, rising and falling in the trough of the sea. As it neared the side, a sailor in the bows stood up, and with a boathook caught at the rope of the gangway. The officers stepped out and came up the side.

Captain Crampton met them at the head of the gangway. The elder of the two Russians was a tall, dark man, bearded and resplendent in blue and gold. He bowed gravely to the captain of the *Flamborough*, but did not speak, leaving it to his companion, a much younger man, whose clean-shaven face displayed the firm lower jaw of the Muscovite.

"I am sorry to disturb you, captain," said the latter, speaking English with a delicate precision that told of unfamiliarity, "but the exigencies of war require it. I wish to see your manifest."

Captain Crampton had expected the request, yet now that it was actually made, he felt it a fresh insult. He would have liked to return a bluff refusal, but he knew that that was impracticable. He could not but admit to himself that the request was preferred with all courtesy, and he was the more angry because he was conscious that his own manner suffered in comparison with that of the Russian.

"Come into my cabin," he said gruffly. "You'll find it all right. All our stuff is for Hong Kong."

He turned and led the way, and the two Russians followed him. Captain Crampton called to the first officer over his shoulder.

"Come in here, Morley. This is as much your business as mine."

Morley followed, and the four men entered the cabin. The manifest was produced, and the officers bent over the papers on the table. At length the younger Russian lifted his head.

"All very satisfactory, captain," he said. "There is nothing here that should give us cause to interfere."

"I hope you are satisfied," said Captain Crampton ungraciously.

The Russian smiled.

"So far as the cargo goes," he said quietly, "we are quite satisfied. But there is another matter that I wish to mention. You have not, by any chance, any political refugees on board, have you? We have received information from Suez that certain persons concerned in an uprising in the southern provinces have escaped on a ship to Port Said, and have there dispersed themselves on the shipping of various nationalities. Have you any of them on board?"

Captain Crampton's temper began to get the better of him.

"If I had," he said stoutly, "you would have no right to interfere with them. They are under the British flag and are not contraband of war. I might remind you of the precedent of the American Civil War."

"That took place a long time ago," answered the Russian, "and we do not follow precedents—we make them."

"You would find it a risky business making one in this case," said the angry captain.

"We shall see," replied the Russian. "Do I understand you to say that you have such people on board?"

"Certainly not," said Captain Crampton sharply. "There is no one on the ship except the crew. I was merely reminding you that if there had been you would have no right to interfere with them."

Again the Russian smiled.

"Fortunately," he said, "the question does not arise, since you say that there are none of them here."

On the whole, Captain Crampton was glad that it did not. He began to be aware that the Russians would take their own way and that the most he could have done would have been to protest.

"I presume, then, sir," went on the Russian, "that you will give me your word of honor that there are no such persons on board your ship?"

"Certainly," replied the captain, "I give you my word."

The Russian turned to his com-

panion and spoke with him in his own language. For a while they conversed earnestly, the younger man smiling and seeming to deprecate what his senior said, the elder frowning and speaking with a certain amount of heat. At length the younger man turned once more to the captain.

"My comrade wishes to search the ship," he said.

"What!" said the astonished captain, "after I have given you my word?"

"I need not say, for myself, that I should be happy to accept it," replied the Russian, "but, as you see, I am not alone."

Captain Crampton turned to the mate.

"Mr. Morley," he said, "tell the boatswain to pipe all hands and muster them on the starboard deck. These gentlemen want to inspect them. And tell them," he went on, his temper rising, "to leave their chests open. Someone may be hiding in them, and of course these Russians will want to see everything. Tell them not to hurry. We have the whole night before us."

Again the two officers conversed energetically. The younger of the two appeared to be urging something, and, as his senior listened, his frown gradually relaxed.

"My comrade," said the Russian who had throughout acted as interpreter, "tells me that he will be satisfied by your written assurance. I have represented to him that we do wrong to doubt your word. If you will give us a written statement to the effect that you harbor none of the persons we speak of, we will forego our search."

Captain Crampton snatched at a sheet of paper and scrawled a few lines.

"There you are," he said, handing it to the Russian ungraciously. "Do you want it witnessed?"

The Russian read it and folded it up.

"That will be quite sufficient," he said, putting it in his pocket. "I wish you good evening, captain, and a pleasant voyage."

Five minutes later the Russian

cruiser dipped her flag, the *Flamborough* answered her, and Captain Crampton ascended the bridge. Down in the engine-room the gong rang once more, and with a sigh of relief Sexton put her full speed ahead and sent her southward again.

VI

At midnight Sexton's watch came to an end, and he ascended the ladder with a heart full of anxiety. Since the intimation that he had received from Taylor, he had had no knowledge as to what was happening, and the time during which the ship had been stopped had been a very trying one. In that period of enforced inaction his mind had been busy with pictures of the search of the ship, the discovery of the girl, and a summons to the bridge to answer for his misdeeds. Never before had the safe path of duty appeared more attractive. Never had deviations from that path seemed to involve so little of romance or so much of care. But as the moments passed and no summons came, he began to grow easier; and when the gong rang for "full speed ahead" he breathed a long sigh of relief and began to fancy himself a hero again. Yet his self-satisfaction was tempered by the thought that he was in ignorance as to what had happened; and in spite of the lateness of the hour he went at once to his own cabin instead of to Cheeseman's, in order to satisfy himself that Vera was really safe.

She was not sleeping. She sat on the little settee, her face supported in the palms of her hands. Her lips were gray, and she was looking straight before her. As he entered she started with a little gesture that told him of the hour of fear through which she had passed. For the first time, Sexton forgot his pose and thought only of her. He laid a finger cautiously on his lip and sat down beside her.

"It's all right, isn't it?" he whispered.

She started again at the sound of his voice.

"I do not know," she answered under her breath. "What has happened?"

"I fancy you know more about it than I do," he replied. "All I know is that Taylor told me there was a Russian ship about. The skipper rang down to stop the engines, and then we went on again. That's all I know."

"I do not know much more," she said. She rose slowly and looked around her as though dazed. "I was here when we stop," she went on. "I look out of the port-hole, and there is the ship." She acted her words as though going through the whole thing again. "I am frightened," she said. "I draw back so that they may not see me. Then I stand here."

She pointed to a stool that stood near the inner wall of the cabin.

"I stand here," she continued, "and I look out and they do not see me. They lower a boat, and then I hear them talking. One man is very angry. And then I see the boat go back and the ship goes on again. That is all."

Sexton pondered seriously.

"They've been searching us," he said. "I expect, though, it was only the cargo they were after. Good business. We've bilked them."

"You think, then," she asked anxiously, "that there is no more danger?"

"None from them," he replied jubilantly. "They're far enough astern by now."

She drew herself up with a little sigh as though waking from some evil dream. Then she turned to him with a face bright with gratitude.

"You have saved me," she cried. "You are my hero, my protector."

"Rot!" said the engineer, failing to rise to the situation and blushing a deep red. "That is," he went on, "I'm jolly glad, of course, that we have bilked them. I'm jolly glad you're safe. But I've done nothing."

"Nothing?" she cried excitedly. "You have done everything, everything. And I am grateful."

Before Sexton was aware of her intention or could prevent her, she had

stooped and, taking his hand in hers; had kissed it.

Sexton started to his feet.

"I say!" he gasped. "I say!" He strove vainly to express himself. "Look here," he went on, "you mustn't do that. You don't know how it feels. You must never do that again. You make a chap feel such a worm."

"But I wish to show you of my gratitude," she replied.

"That's all right," said the engineer; "we'll take all that for granted. And don't speak so loud. Someone might hear us."

Her face was piteous in its disappointment, born of his failure to respond properly to her emotion. She seemed to shrink back into herself as though ashamed of the demonstration that had come so naturally to her.

"Oh, you English," she cried, "you are so hard, so cold! It is so simple a thing that I have done; and now you are angry with me."

She sat down upon the settee and hid her face in her hands. Sexton sat down beside her suddenly. He saw that she was greatly upset, and his heart was filled with pity for her. She seemed so much alone, so very friendless. Almost without volition he put his arm around her; and at his touch, she turned and clung to him.

"You are good!" she cried; "you are very good to me. And for what you have done I would go with you to the end of the world, if you would let me."

He had no words to answer her. Something had risen up unbidden within him, something that was akin to pity and yet was not pity, overpowering him with its strength. Unconsciously his arm tightened around her and they sat together in silence without moving. Then he kissed her.

After some moments he released her very gently and stood up.

"I must go," he said; "I must go now."

Her hand caught his coat as though reluctant to leave it. She hid her face in it to cover her blushes. He also was agitated. He wanted time to think of what had befallen him, to col-

lect himself, to judge what bearing this would have upon his future. Very gently he disengaged her hand.

VII

He stepped out upon the deck and into a world that had become strangely transfigured. The moon floated serenely in a cloudless sky, and its light came to him over the waters upon a path of silver. Well in under the land a gentle haze hid the bases of the hills, but their peaks rose above it into the clear sky. The ship moved very steadily through the calm sea. Sexton was anything but calm. His brain was full of fanciful imaginings, and for the first time he heard the throb of the ship's engines as though it were a heart's beat, keeping time with his own. He had a vision, too, as though the world were stretched out before him like an unrolled map; and everywhere upon it were countless multitudes whose hearts were beating in unison with his. In the crowded cities he saw them, and again, alone upon a coral, surf-beaten shore by a few scant palm-trees; but everywhere, men, living and loving, with a woman to care for, even as he had. He saw himself with new eyes, a man with a man's responsibilities; and the very difficulties that lay before him did but stimulate him to meet them. His soul leaped up to face them, and over all a mad exultation came upon him because he loved and was loved, so that he had difficulty in refraining from shouting aloud and clenched his fists forcibly in a physical effort to calm himself. Many times he walked up and down the deck, and each time he passed her cabin he glanced at it, picturing to himself what she was doing, and marveling afresh that this great good fortune had befallen him. Not until four bells had rung did he realize that it was time for him to seek rest, and he flung himself into Cheeseman's cabin and fell fast asleep on the settee from very weariness.

Two hours later he was aroused by the entrance of the second engineer.

Cheeseman was hot and tired. He dipped the corner of a dirty towel into his wash-jug and ran it delicately over his face, the only method of ablution that he condescended to practise between ports. Then he sat down on his bunk and looked at Sexton without good-will.

"Well," he said, "you're a nice chap, you are. See what you've done —get us stopped by a Russian war-ship and lose the skipper a valuable hour's time."

"What happened?" asked Sexton, too anxious to resent his tone. "I know they stopped us, of course; but what did they do it for?"

"What do you suppose?" said Cheeseman testily. "They were here to look for that girl of yours."

"That's absurd," said Sexton readily. "If they'd wanted her they would have searched; and if they had searched they would have found her. They must have come to look over the cargo."

"As a matter of fact, that is what they did," replied Cheeseman more soberly, "but they wanted the girl, too. I heard it from the chief steward. He was in the pantry near the skipper's cabin and he couldn't help hearing what went on. It seems they swore she was on board, and the old man swore that she wasn't. And they got him to take his oath that she wasn't and made him write it down, too. And the old man did it, and swore himself blue in the face and perjured himself at that, thanks to you. I'd advise you to take care he doesn't find out. It will be a cold time for you if he does, you may take my word for it. Of course, I'm not in it at all. I warned you of that, didn't I? I can't afford to lose my job. But, all the same, I sha'n't be sorry when she's ashore at Perim, I tell you straight."

"You didn't tell the steward anything?" asked Sexton anxiously.

"Not such a fool," snapped Cheeseman. "And how the deuce could I tell him anything if I didn't know anything? And I don't know anything. You mind that."

Sexton expressed his relief. He felt

a slackening of the tension and showed it.

But Cheeseman was not altogether pleased that the tension had relaxed. Having taken the stand firmly on the point that he himself was not involved, it pleased him to paint the picture of the toils from which he had escaped in as dark a shade as possible. Sitting on his bunk and swinging his legs to and fro, he croaked gloomily.

"If you had to be careful before," he said, "you'll want to look twice as slippy now. You know what the old man is? How do you suppose he'll like it when he finds out he's been made a fool of? How do you suppose he'll take it if he finds out he's given his sacred oath there was no one on board but the crew and then discovers himself to be the worst sort of Ananias? I'll tell you, my son. You'll be up the very tallest kind of gum-tree if he does find it out. You're going to discover that your day's work will be done, so far as this ship is concerned.

"He won't find out," said Sexton feebly.

"Won't he?" croaked Cheeseman ominously. "It'll be a miracle if he doesn't. How do you suppose you are going to get that girl ashore at Perim? It isn't like the London Docks, you know. It's bright sunlight and a crowd of niggers on the shore and on the ship, too, wanting to sell things. And there are about eight Europeans, and some of them will talk. It's all the East to a China orange that he hears of it. And then the old man will go on shore and the first person he'll meet will be your girl. 'Hallo, my dear,' he'll say; he'll say, 'Where have you come from?' Then she'll say, 'Please, sir, I've come off that nice ship there.' Then he'll look and see his old tub and he'll say, 'Oh, the hades you have! And who hid you on that ship, my dear?' And then she'll say, 'Please, sir, it was the fourth engineer—such a nice young man.' And then he'll say, 'Isn't he? I'm just going on board to see that nice young man and give him a nice little surprise.' And that'll settle your hash."

"I say," said Sexton, a little depressed, "it is a bit difficult, now that I come to think of it. Can't you suggest something?"

"Lots of things," said Cheeseman maliciously. "Suppose you were to smear her with yellow ochre and dress her up as a Chinese fireman?"

"No," said Sexton emphatically. "Talk sense."

"I would if I thought you'd know it when you heard it," retorted his superior maliciously. "Well, if that doesn't do, what do you think of tying her in a sack and sending her ashore with the mails?"

"I don't think anything of it," said Sexton, much annoyed. "If you can't think of anything better than that, you'd better leave it to me. I can."

"Stop a moment," said Cheeseman, rubbing his hands. "After all, why should you bother about it? Why not leave it to the next man she comes across? After all, your responsibilities end when you've brought her to Perim. Let him send on board for her."

"Be serious a minute," said Sexton, flushing. "I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to wait until the old man has gone on shore, and there's no one about. Then I shall get her into a boat and see her on shore. I shall have to find someone to look after her. I daresay there will be a woman or two whom I can put her in charge of. Anyhow, that's what I'm going to try."

"You'll get caught," croaked Cheeseman venomously, "you'll get caught as sure as eggs. First person you'll meet when you get her out of that cabin will be Morley; and the first person you meet on shore will be the old man. You'll get caught, and you'll lose your job. And then you'll starve. That's what will happen to you."

Sexton rose and stuck his hands deep in his pockets.

"If I am," he said, "I don't care a damn."

VIII

CHEESEMAN's forebodings were to be fulfilled, but not in the exact manner

he had predicted. He was so far correct in that he anticipated discovery and was only wrong in that he fancied it would take place at Perim. As a matter of fact, it came before. Two days passed quietly and in security. It was that very security which brought about the exposure.

Vera, who had for a day or two been content to undergo her rigid confinement, began to grow restless. She had nothing with which she could occupy herself, and the time hung heavily on her hands. For a whole day she had looked jealously upon the photograph of the maiden that hung on the wall. She did not doubt Sexton's loyalty, but she developed a healthy hatred of the girl whose picture confronted her. Sexton, coming in in the evening, found her looking at it, and promptly plucked it from its place and tore it into fragments.

"All that sort of thing is done with," he said abruptly.

"You mean you did not care?" she whispered.

"Not I," he replied; "I did not care at all. I only liked to fancy that I did. Silly of me, wasn't it?"

"Yes," she answered seriously, "I think it was."

"You see, I knew no better," he said with a smile, "until you taught me." Which pretty speech entirely appeased her.

Nevertheless, in his absence the time hung heavy, and Vera began to enliven it with little peeps out of the cabin door. They gave her a pleasant feeling of adventure, and with each successful effort the sense of impunity grew upon her until she no longer took the precautions necessary to ensure her safety. She no longer listened so carefully for footsteps before she ventured to look out. Her excess of confidence led to her downfall; for, one fresh morning, peeping out of her cabin, she looked straight into the eyes of Captain Crampton, who was standing not ten yards away.

With a little cry of dismay she drew back and slammed the door, bolting it hastily and falling back upon the

settee, vexed with herself for her folly and wondering what was going to happen. On his part, the captain stared at the cabin door, rubbed his eyes and endeavored to find language strong enough to express his feelings. Recovering himself, he strode forward to the door of the engineer's cabin and rapped sharply.

"Open the door," he said, quickly and authoritatively. "Open the door at once."

But Vera was much too frightened. She remained very still, hoping only that he would go away.

The skipper rapped again, but with no effect. A moment later, Morley stepped out of his cabin, twirling his mustache.

"Morley!" called the skipper, "Morley, come here."

The mate touched his cap and came aft.

"That's the fourth engineer's cabin, isn't it?" asked Captain Crampton, pointing with an incriminating finger in the direction of the closed door.

"Yes, sir," said the astonished mate.

"Then what is a girl doing in there?" asked the captain wrathfully.

Morley's surprise became accentuated.

"Girl, sir?" he asked dubiously, fearing that he had not heard properly.

"Yes, a girl. Don't I make myself plain? I saw a girl looking out at that door a minute ago."

For a moment the mate pondered the effect of the heat of the Red Sea upon his superior's cerebral convulsions.

"A girl, sir?" he repeated. "Are you sure?"

"I saw her only a minute ago as plainly as I see you."

The mate strode to the door and knocked.

"There doesn't seem to be anyone there, sir," he said, after a pause. "I can get no answer."

Captain Crampton nodded decisively.

"Send Sexton to me," he said sharply. "I shall be on the bridge."

He strode forward and mounted the companion, bristling with fury.

Morley strode aft and called to a quartermaster.

"Pass the word for Mr. Sexton," he said sharply. "The captain wants to see him on the bridge."

But it was fated that the fourth engineer should fall into the skipper's hands in a state of blissful unconsciousness. At the moment that Morley was looking for him, he was busy cleaning one of the winches on the port side. He had just finished it when he recollects that the chief engineer had bade him go up on the bridge to look at the steering connections; and, in happy ignorance of the fate in store for him, he ascended the port companion.

As he reached the top he found himself looking into the eyes of the captain, who stood not more than two yards away. Captain Crampton's brow was gathered into a portentous frown, his hands were buried deeply in his pockets, and his whole appearance showed that he meant unpleasant business. Sexton's immediate thought was that he was discovered, but the skipper's first speech gave him a momentary respite.

"Well, sir," said the captain, "what do you mean by coming on my bridge in that state?"

The relief was so sudden that Sexton could not forbear a smile. He glanced down at his clothes which had suffered in the process of cleaning the winch, and smiled again. The smile did not improve the skipper's temper.

"Let me tell you, sir," he said, with ever-increasing severity, "that when I send for an officer of this ship to interview me on my bridge, I expect him to attend in a costume that shows a fitting sense of respect to me as his captain."

Sexton's heart sank.

"I'm very sorry, sir," he said; "I didn't know that you had sent for me. The chief told me that the steering connections wanted looking at, and I came up here to see to them."

"I sent for you, sir," said the captain, ignoring his explanations, "to know what that girl who occupies your cabin is doing on this ship."

So it had come! Five minutes be-

fore, Sexton had been imagining himself secure, and now he was confronted with the threatened catastrophe.

"Girl, sir?" he said, with an effort to discover how much the skipper knew.

"Girl, sir," replied the captain, mocking him; "the girl I saw looking out of your cabin not ten minutes ago."

Under the circumstances a clean breast seemed the only course, and Sexton began to recount his adventure. Captain Crampton listened with an incredulity that gave place to wonder—wonder, not so much as to the essential improbability of the story, but at what he chose to consider the engineer's impertinence in the course that he had taken.

"Do you know, sir," he said, "what you have done? You have caused me to give a false declaration in a matter for which I am primarily responsible."

He paused as though to allow the gravity of his accusation to sink into his hearer's mind. After a moment, as Sexton made no answer, he continued with increased severity:

"Well, sir, haven't you the grace to say that you are sorry?"

Then Sexton surprised both the captain and himself.

"I'm not," he said abruptly.

"You're not?" almost shouted the captain.

"No, I'm not," repeated the fourth engineer firmly. "I'm sorry, of course, that you had to give a false declaration. But you see, if I had told you, you might have had to give the girl up. Now you can't, and I'm glad you can't."

Captain Crampton looked at him grimly.

"Do you know what I'm going to do with you?" he asked.

Sexton made no reply.

"I'm going to put you ashore at Perim," said the captain. "I shall pay you your wages up to the day you leave the ship, and I shall wire the owners what I have done and my reasons for doing it. I shall get another engineer at Columbo."

"All right, sir," said Sexton, "that will save me a lot of trouble."

Captain Crampton glared at him.

"I'm glad of that," he snorted. "I'm always delighted to know that I can be of service. If you would let me know how it will save you trouble—just as a favor, you know—I shall be obliged to you."

"Well, you see, sir," said Sexton, "she will be going ashore there and I shall be able to look after her."

"To one of your disposition," said the captain briefly, "that will, no doubt, be an unmixed satisfaction."

He waved his hand in dismissal, and Sexton left the bridge.

IX

MORLEY strode into the doctor's cabin, brushing his mustache roughly with his fingers.

"Ah, doctor," he said, "the girls! the girls!"

There was nothing very new in this exclamation on the lips of the first officer. He used it frequently, sometimes in connection with something that had been said, sometimes merely as a punctuation to a train of thought in his own mind. Dr. Anderson had heard it often enough, and he smiled slightly with an air of superiority. He was very young and imagined himself a woman-hater.

"Same old story," he said, pointing to a seat. "What has put it into your head now?"

"It's never out," said the first officer promptly. "They're always with us, doctor, bless 'em! A healthy man should never have them out of his head. He'll do his work a lot better if he thinks that the dear little girl he left behind him is thinking of him and trying to imagine what he's doing. The girls! the girls! What should we do without them?"

He smote the palms of his hands together and rubbed them with intense satisfaction.

The doctor looked at him with all the pity of twenty-three years.

"We should be a lot better," he said. "If all I hear is true, that young ass,

Sexton, has been getting himself into trouble about a girl. I fancy he's wishing now that he hadn't taken your view of things."

"Ah," said the mate eagerly, "and a very pretty girl, too. Have you seen her?"

"Not I," replied the doctor, with lofty superiority. He had little enough justification for his pose, having spent a full half-hour sneaking around the ship in the hope of meeting her. "What's a girl to me?"

"You'll find out one of these days, my boy," said the mate briskly. "You'll find out when you've had time to let your whiskers grow."

He touched upon a sore subject. Nine out of ten ships' doctors, when they find themselves on the ocean waves and far from all who know them, attempt the cultivation of a beard, mustache, or whiskers. Dr. Anderson's efforts, in spite of many stimulating lotions of his own concoction, had hitherto resulted in nothing more than a little blistering of the skin on his face. He was galled also at the implication that he was still too young to take an interest in matters relating to the affections.

"Pooh!" he said, with an uneasy laugh, "I gave up all that sort of thing long ago."

"Well, just you take a look at this one," said the mate. "She is a perfect little daisy. Of course the old man is wild at being taken in. To hear him talk, you'd think he actually wanted to hand her over to those Russians we met the other day. But I'm jolly glad he didn't get the chance. It would have been an insult to the British flag. That's what it would have been. Come along and let's find her, doctor. I'll introduce you to her."

Anderson rose with a reluctance that was purely assumed and followed the mate out upon the deck. Half-way down the starboard side of the centre-castle, they came upon Vera, sitting in a deck-chair. The shadow of the awning fell across her face, her hands were crossed in her lap, and she seemed asleep. But at the sound of the men's

footsteps she turned her head, and seeing the mate, smiled her welcome.

"Let me introduce my friend, Dr. Anderson," said the mate, waving his hand. "He's been very anxious to make your acquaintance ever since he heard you were on board."

She nodded to the doctor brightly.

"But why," she said, "does he wish to know me?"

The mate had already had some conversation with Vera and became diplomatic.

"The fact is," he replied, "he thinks very much as you do—about government and all that sort of thing."

"Ah," she said, with a childish seriousness, "he is, then, one of us? One who believes in our cause—the cause of the people? I like to make friends of those who believe in it."

"He thinks of nothing else," said the mate mendaciously. "If you want a man who can help you to poison every member of the Russian Government, here he is. He'll be at your service when he's finished with the crew."

"But you are joking with me?" she said with a smile. "And I want you to be serious. I want you to tell me—now that I am found out—will they do anything to my friend—to my friend who helped me?"

"Well, you see—" began the mate. He broke off abruptly and took refuge in a question. "Hasn't he told you?" he said.

"No. He only said it was all right. It is all right, is it not?"

"Well, if he thinks so," replied the mate with embarrassment, "of course it's all right. But you see the skipper is in a bit of a wax. He thinks he ought to have been told. And so he ought, of course. Anyway, Sexton is going ashore with you at Perim, so he'll be able to look after you."

"Do you mean," she cried with concern, "that he will be discharged—that he will be no longer engineer of this ship?"

"I'm afraid he won't," said Morley; "but don't bother about that. He will soon get another."

"Oh, you say that to please me," she

cried, springing up. "But I know, I know. I must find way and comfort him."

"I think you might defer that until you get him on shore," said the doctor blandly. "Have a little consideration for us. We shall not have the pleasure of your company for so long as he will."

"You? Pooh!" She waved him aside superbly. "You are not like he is. You did not take the risk. He is a hero, and I have told him so."

Holding her head high in the air, she marched off. The two men looked after her.

"That won't do young Sexton any good," remarked the mate thoughtfully. "If he gets his head stuffed up with ideas like those, there will be no place for him on shipboard again. But the girl, eh? Wasn't I right? Isn't she a daisy?"

In the meantime Vera had gone aft in search of the engineer. She found him cleaning a winch.

"I have just heard," she said indignantly, "that because of what you have done for me, you are to get discharged—the sack, as you call it, eh?"

He smiled at her bit of slang as he looked up at her.

"Well," he said, "what about it?"

"What about it?" she cried. "It is a shame. I did not think they could have been so unkind. I will not allow it."

In spite of himself, he laughed.

"I'm afraid you can't prevent it, my dear," he said. "Don't go worrying your pretty little head over things you can't help."

She shook her head aggressively. "Shall you be very sorry to get discharged?" she asked.

"I sha'n't like it, of course," he said, "but all the same, I'm glad I'm not going to leave you."

"But you must not get discharged," she replied earnestly. "I should never forgive myself."

"You need not reproach yourself," he said steadily. "You could not help it."

"You do not know what I can do," she said, tossing her head.

He smiled again. "Come," he replied, "what can you do, if it comes to that?"

If he had expected a confession of helplessness, he was to be disappointed. She nodded mysteriously.

"Wait," she said; "wait, and you shall see." And with another nod she was gone.

X

SEXTON grinned as he looked after her. He admired her pluck and the defiance she was ready to throw in the face of established fact, but he had no idea that her words meant more than an announcement of spirit. Fortunately for himself he had no idea of what she was going to do.

Vera, holding her head high and keeping her lips tightly compressed, marched directly toward the port companion and ascended the bridge. Arrived at the top she looked around her and soon saw Captain Crampton, seated in a deck-chair aft the chart-house, and puffing lazily at a cigar. She walked directly over to him, and stood looking down upon him indignantly.

The captain looked up with an expression of astonishment that rapidly gave place to admiration. He had seen the girl before as she walked about the ship, but had hitherto refrained from speaking to her. His astonishment and admiration were due to her courage in confronting him upon his own bridge, and he waited with a certain amount of interest for what she was about to say.

"I have heard," she began, "that because your engineer was kind to me, because he protected me, you are going to send him away from the ship."

"Well?" said the captain.

"Well," she replied, "you are a bad man if you do so; and I have come to tell you so."

Captain Crampton was amused at the seriousness with which she leveled her charge. Criticism of any kind was strange to him, and from most people he would have been quick to resent it;

but from this young girl with the blue eyes that were looking at him so steadily, he found it rather refreshing.

"I am a bad man, am I?" he said, removing his cigar and blowing its smoke about him. "My dear little girl, you must not make sweeping charges of that kind. Sexton is leaving this ship for gross dereliction of duty. After all, I am the captain, you know, and I am responsible for everything that takes place on board. And you don't suppose I am going to pardon any man who conceals from me the fact that we carry so charming a passenger. The thing is absurd."

"Oh, you can joke," she retorted indignantly. "You can say pretty things to me. But if you had known, you would have given me up to the Russian ship, would you not?"

The captain pondered.

"Upon my soul, I don't know," he said after a pause; "I should not have given you up without a strong protest. You are on a British ship and they would have had no right to take you. But if they had insisted, I don't quite know what I could have done. You couldn't expect me to let the ship be taken back to Port Said with the loss of time and money to the owners for your sake my dear. Still, I should have made a very strong protest."

She snapped her fingers.

"Do you think they would have cared *that* for your protest?" she queried. "They would have taken me and sent me to prison or to Siberia; and you would have allowed it?"

"I seem to have been harboring a very desperate character," he answered, smiling at her; "but I might have told that from the audacity with which she comes on my bridge."

"What does it matter where I have come?" she said indignantly. "Is this part of the ship any different from any other part? Or am I different from you? All persons are equal, and I have just as much right to be on this part of the ship as you have."

"Dear, dear," said Captain Crampton, opening his eyes wide on the enunciation of this heresy, "all persons are

equal, are they? Well, my dear, that sort of thing might do on land; though I can't say. But on the sea—by George, think of it! A ship with everyone a captain! We'd soon have her on the rocks. No, no; you can't run a ship on republican lines."

"So much the worse, then, for the ship," she cried.

The captain grinned. Then he rose lazily from his chair and went into the chart-house, returning with a long telescope.

"There's a ship over there," he said, pointing over the port bow. "No, no, not a Russian cruiser this time, only a peaceful merchantman. Would you like to have a look at it?"

"Do you think I am a child?" she retorted, "that you give me a toy to play with?"

Captain Crampton was amused at her sharpness in detecting his motive.

"What is it you want?" he asked.

"I want you to allow Mr. Sexton to stay on board," she cried, "and to let me go on shore alone. Why should he suffer for my sake?"

"I couldn't think of it," he answered. "Don't meddle with things you don't understand. Now, look through this."

He leveled the glass as he spoke, and supported it. Curiosity overcame her indignation and she looked through. A waste of tumbling water swam into the field of the glass and a moment later she had a glimpse of a large steamer with two squat masts and a blue funnel, working her way north.

"One of Holt's boats," said the skipper. "Looks near through that, doesn't it?"

"Oh, it is lovely, lovely!" she cried excitedly. "Show me something else."

"Something else?" said the captain with tolerant amusement. He paused a moment and then led her to the front of the bridge. "Look through that," he said, once more leveling the telescope. "What do you see there?"

She applied her eye to the glass, screwing up her forehead in the effort to see.

"It is very faint," she cried.

"Yes, but what is it?"

She looked again. "I think it is land," she said at last.

"Quite right," said the captain. "That is Perim, where we shall put you on shore."

He placed the glass under his arm and smiled at her benignly.

XI

"I THINK—" said Morley reflectively. He paused.

He sat in the doctor's cabin, his back pressed against the washstand, his feet drawn up on to the settee, and his hands locked firmly about his knees. Opposite to him in a cane chair of Hong Kong manufacture, the doctor awaited the result of his meditations.

"I think—" he said again, and paused once more.

"Don't hurt yourself over it. Take your time," suggested the medico gently.

"Well, see here," said the mate, flushing, "I was just thinking of that poor girl. What is to happen to her after the skipper has put her ashore?"

"He will no doubt make suitable arrangements," said the doctor lightly. "He will probably hand her over to the harbor master with instructions to turn her over to the first Russian cruiser that happens along. So her own country will receive her with open arms, and justice will be done."

The mate looked at him resentfully.

"If I didn't know that you were joking, Pills," he said, "I'd tell you what I thought of you. Do be serious a minute. From all I can see, Sexton is pretty well gone on the girl. He's not taking it to heart much that the old man is giving him the sack, I can tell you. It's my opinion that if the old man hadn't meant to put him on shore, he would be more down in the mouth than he is."

"Such are the lengths," commented the doctor, "to which amatory folly will lead the youthful mind."

"At any rate," went on Morley, "he will be landed along with her and he will have nothing except his month's pay. That might get him back to Port

Said in a coasting steamer, but it certainly won't do more. It won't help her. The girls, the girls, doctor—they are the light of our eyes, the star of the mariner's existence. Hang it, we ought to do something to help them when we get the chance."

"Come to the point," said the doctor mildly.

"The point is," said the mate testily, "that we ought not to allow that poor girl to leave this ship without a penny in her pocket, and alone and friendless."

"She won't leave it alone, and she won't leave it friendless," said the doctor. "There's Sexton."

"I've told you how Sexton will be fixed," retorted the mate. "Now I think we ought to get up a little whip round, so as to make the girl a little presentation. It would be something for the young couple to start life on, eh? —to give them something to go on with, to get back to Port Said with. Sexton might get a job there."

"You speak," said the doctor, "as though they were engaged."

"So they are," said the mate promptly. "I caught them kissing each other last night. Sexton's a straight chap."

"You have a trusting nature," replied the doctor. "In my experience, kissing doesn't always mean an engagement."

"I don't want to hear anything about your experiences," retorted the mate maliciously. "You'll have to answer for *them* when you get back to England. Every girl you ever ran away to sea from will be waiting for you by the Royal Albert dock. We'll leave all that for the present and talk about decent people. I want someone to get a subscription up, and you're the man to do it."

"What? Me?" demanded the doctor, too much astonished to be grammatical.

"Who else?" demanded the mate. "I can't, of course. The old man mightn't like it and I've got my position to think of. You, on the contrary, have nothing to lose. You're only out for the voyage on a kind of spree; and

all you medical chaps know how to get money out of people."

"All right," said the doctor, "I'll see what I can do. It will have to be among a few of us, of course. I can't ask the crew. In a thing of this kind, the sooner one begins, the better, so here goes. How many hundreds am I to put you down for?"

"You can put me down for three quid," replied the mate drily, "and if you want her to have hundreds, you can give them yourself."

"You seem to think," said Anderson, "that I own the line. I don't. All the same, I'm not going to be outdone by a blooming first officer, even if he is a sentimental. Three from you and three from me—that's six. Not a bad start. Now I'll go and interview the others."

Armed with a note-book and a pencil, he started on his errand. The first person he encountered was the chief engineer, a dried-up little man from Blackburn way, who spoke little and then very much to the point. He listened silently to the doctor's proposals, and inspected the amounts already entered.

"A fool and his money are soon parted," he remarked, unconsciously commenting upon his own speech by forking out a handful of change from his pocket. "How long do you suppose young Sexton will stick to this?" He handed over three sovereigns as he spoke.

"It isn't for Sexton," said the doctor. "It's for her."

"Same thing," said the engineer. "Do you think I'm blind?"

"Three pounds," said the doctor, balancing the coin. "Make it guineas for the credit of the engine-room."

But the engineer was obdurate, and Anderson departed in search of the third mate.

"Heya!" said Green, "I'm on the rocks. Eight pounds a month is all I get. You can't expect me to act up to you millionaires. Here's a quid, if that's any use to you?"

"While we do not reject the abundance of the Pharisee," said the doctor,

pocketing the coin, "we are careful not to overlook the widow's mite."

He sought out Horrocks, the second officer.

Horrocks was a married man, and he assured the doctor that he had had more than enough experience in handing over good coin of the realm to a woman. Nevertheless, after a little persuasion, he also forked out a sovereign.

"Not for your wife, this time," said the doctor cheerfully. "It will be a nice change."

"Go to the devil," said the second officer, as he walked away.

Anderson looked after him.

"I have it," he said; "he must mean Cheeseman."

Accordingly he went in search of the second engineer.

As he passed down the port alleyway and around the stern of the centre-castle, he was stopped by the boatswain.

"Beggin' your pardon, sir," said that worthy, "the carpenter happened to overhear you talkin' to Mr. Green. We understood that you was gettin' up a little subscription for Missie, who has been aboard of us these last few days?"

"So I am," said the doctor, stopping and fingering his note-book. "Would you care to join us?"

"Well, Chips and me was thinking that perhaps a sovereign, between us—"

"Splendid!" said the doctor enthusiastically. "I'll put you down for it."

"There's the quartermasters, sir," said the boatswain. "They wouldn't like to be left out; and for a matter of that, I think the crew——"

"Well, if you think so," replied Anderson, sucking his pencil a trifle dubiously. "Of course it's very good of them. But don't let any of them give more than five shillings. We don't want to hurt anyone. I'll leave the collecting to you."

"This," he said to himself as he hurried on, "is going to be a big thing. This is going to be all right for the credit of the ship."

He paused as he came round the end of the starboard alleyway and beheld Cheeseman sucking his piece of oil waste. Even the enthusiasm born of his recent successes faded somewhat in the face of the very unpromising appearance presented by the second engineer. He approached him as pleasantly as possible.

"I want a word with you," he said. "Some of us are getting up a little subscription for Miss Dobhrova, and we should like you to join us. What may I put you down for?"

Cheeseman looked at him with silent asperity for some moments before removing his piece of oil waste.

"Begging?" he asked. "I don't like beggars."

"In a good cause," said the doctor good-humoredly. "You see, we feel that the lady's presence on this ship has been somewhat of an honor, and we should like to mark the occasion. From what I've seen it's likely to come in as a wedding present—a set of silver spoons, you know, or a toast-rack, eh?"

"I don't hold with marriage," said Cheeseman.

"Neither do I," replied the doctor pleasantly, "but everyone isn't as sensible as you and I are; so this little attention might do something to soften the asperities of the matrimonial estate."

"Bah!" said Cheeseman sourly.

The doctor tried a different tone.

"Seriously," he said, lowering his voice confidentially, "we should like your help. If we don't put our shoulders to the wheel we shall send that girl on shore without anything to bless herself with. That wouldn't do, if it was only for the credit of the ship."

"The credit of the ship is nothing to me," snapped Cheeseman. "I've got my own credit to think of—that's enough for me."

"Come, Mr. Cheeseman," persisted Anderson, "we all know your generosity. Shall I put you down for a couple of quid?"

"No," said the second engineer.

"Oh, well," said Anderson, shutting up his book, "I expected it."

"What's that you say?" snarled Cheeseman.

"I said I expected it," said the doctor calmly.

Cheeseman eyed him ill-naturedly.

"I suppose you think," he said at last, "that because I don't spend my money like you chaps; because I don't swagger about in clothes for which I haven't paid; because I don't waste my money ashore getting drunk at every bar I come across, that I'm a mean, close-fisted hound. I'll show you. How much money have you got?"

"Let me see," said the astonished Anderson, consulting his note-book. "Six-nine—thirteen pounds."

The second engineer dived into his cabin and returned with a greasy canvas bag, from which he took a ten-pound note and three sovereigns.

"There," he said, handing them to the doctor, "that'll show you."

"Oh, come," said Anderson reluctantly, "it's very good of you, of course; but I couldn't take all this."

"You'll either take that or nothing," snarled Cheeseman. "I'll show you I'm as good as the lot of you put together. Please yourself. Which is it to be?"

"Oh, I'll take this with pleasure," said Anderson. "But are you sure you won't miss it?"

"That's the sort you are," said Cheeseman with a laugh. "I know you all. You'll give what you don't miss."

He dived into his cabin, slamming the door behind him.

This was Anderson's first surprise. A second awaited him as he stood near the door of the skipper's cabin, counting up his gains. He felt a hand laid heavily upon his shoulder, and turning, he beheld Captain Crampton.

"What's all this, doctor?" said the skipper, inspecting the note-book.

"A little subscription, sir," said the doctor, flushing, uncertain as to whether the captain would approve of his action.

"Buying a trousseau?" asked the skipper grimly.

"Something of the sort, sir," said Anderson nervously.

"I thought as much," said the captain. "I don't want to know anything about it—in my official capacity—of course. As a private man, if you want a fiver you are welcome to it."

"Very good of you, sir," said Anderson, promptly pocketing the note that the captain held out to him. "You wouldn't like to make the presentation, I suppose?"

"Certainly not," said the captain. "I don't want to know anything about it. I disapprove of the whole thing."

The doctor smiled and took his leave. A few moments later he dashed into Morley's cabin waving his note-book above his head.

"Thirty-one pounds!" he cried, "thirty-one pounds! And there will be more from the crew. Say thirty-five."

"By George!" said Morley, gazing at him in admiration. "It's robbery, Pills, sheer robbery, that's what it is; and you ought to have been a curate at a church bazaar. They'd have made you a bishop."

XII

TOWARD evening the waters narrowed rapidly to the southern outlet of the Red Sea and the ship closed with the land. On the port bow Bab-el-Mandeb lifted its peak into the calm of an evening sky. Over against it, the hills of Africa lay dark beneath a sunset of violet and gold. Though the daylight had not yet gone, the fiery eye of the lighthouse on Perim Island winked unceasingly, as though to suggest its readiness for the unsleeping vigil of the night.

The *Flamborough* slowed down and waited for a pilot. In response to its signals a boat put out and a lemon-colored man whose manner conveyed an impression of intense weariness came on board. He ascended the gangway, shook hands with the captain and at once proceeded to take the ship in.

Sexton stood by the port railings looking out toward the shores of the island as they slid past. He was conscious of many feelings that he was unable to analyze. He was regretting the loss of his employment, the safe and certain employment that had once seemed so tiresome in his eyes, and now was so desirable. There was something ironical in the fate that had given him work when he had been unable to appreciate it, and had deprived him of it now that he had a man's responsibilities and would have given much for the chance of it. The future seemed dark enough save for the fact that the girl he loved was to share it with him. He made up his mind to accept any work so long as it was honest, to turn his hand to anything without grumbling. He would seek romance no more. He was a man willing to take a man's part in the world for the sake of a woman who loved and trusted him. And so at that moment when he had turned his back on the shadow of romance, the true romance came to him and stood beside him.

A hand was laid lightly upon his arm, and turning, he looked into the girl's eyes. They were full of tears, and when she spoke her voice was tremulous.

"I am sorry," she said. "I am sorry that I have brought you into this trouble."

"It would have been worse if I had had to leave you here," he answered.

"You will never leave me?"

"Do you wish me to?"

He felt her arm tighten on his. "Never!" she said, under her breath.

He put his arm around her. "I never will," he said quietly; "by God's help, I never will."

For a moment they stood in silence.

Then he spoke again.

"Out there," he said, waving his hand toward the land, "we begin a new life together. I was thinking before you came what a change that life would be. I shall have to look around for work; and after this business, I suppose I shall have some little difficulty in

finding it. I have never had any difficulty before, you understand. It has all been very plain sailing. And because it has been so easy I have never valued it as I might have done. I had no one except myself to work for and I have grumbled at its dullness. Now that I have you to work for, work seems the only thing worth having—plain, dull, every-day work—so long as it is done for you. It is a new point of view for me.

"I daresay," he went on, "that this business has made some change in your point of view also. I should like to think it had. Not that I think you have anything to learn, as I had. But I should be glad to know that I had brought something new into your life. I should feel that I had been able to give you something in return for all you have given me."

"And do you think," she answered in a low tone, "that you have not done so? Oh, but you are wrong! I, too, am changed. I have been discontented with the world. I have seen so much poverty and misery, and I thought it very cruel. So, perhaps, it is. But I thought I could set it right—I!" She laughed a little bitterly. "But I know now that I have not the power. And you have taught me that the world can be very kind. And I know my mission now. It is different."

"Yes?" he said quietly.

"You are to work for me, and I am to make you happy—that is all, is it not?"

She laughed, with something in her laughter that was almost a sob.

"That is all," he said gently. "If there is anything else, we shall do it together."

The rattle of the anchor-chains rang out, the ship heaved short on them and swung slowly with the tide. Sexton awoke as though from a dream, and took a long breath. A moment later, Anderson, Morley, Green and a few members of the crew came up the port alleyway. Sexton took his arm hastily from the girl's waist and turned to face them.

"It's all right, Sexton," said Morley good-naturedly. "Don't let us disturb you. We've just come on a bit of business. Fire away, Pills."

The doctor stepped forward, clearing his throat with an air of importance. He proceeded to read from a sheet of paper which he held in his hand.

"We, the undersigned," he began, addressing Vera, "being desirous of marking our appreciation of the honor conferred upon us by the presence of Miss Dobhrova upon this ship, do hereby tender her a small present as a token of our esteem; and we wish further to express our pleasure that we have been—ahem! however unofficially—the means of her escape from the Russian cruiser, *Ladoga*."

An emphatic murmur of applause interrupted him.

"And further," he continued, "we wish to include in our appreciation, the name of Mr. Sexton, our fourth engineer, to whom, we realize, Miss Dobhrova principally owes her safety. We trust that his efforts will meet with a fitting recompense, and"—he grinned as he departed from the printed text—"we think it not unlikely."

He finished amid cheers and handed the purse to Vera. She took it shyly and opened it.

"Money!" she cried. "Oh, but there is a lot of money here."

"Thirty-five pounds," said the doctor modestly. "A trifle, but it will do to be going on with."

"Oh, you are good!" she cried. "You are all very good to me."

Sexton also essayed a speech.

"I say, you chaps!" he said, "I say, you chaps, it's jolly decent of you, by George! We sha'n't forget this, shall we, Vera?"

"Never!" she cried gratefully. "Never!"

"Oh, well, that's all right," said Morley brusquely. He was a modest man and disliked praise. "Come, three cheers for our young couple!"

They were given with a will and a hearty handshaking followed.

Half an hour later, Sexton and Vera left the ship. As they were rowed toward the shore he took her hand.

"A new life?" he said, looking at her and smiling.

She smiled back at him. "I am not afraid," she said.



THE DOWNWARD PATH

"IT'S certainly too bad!" with sighful solemnity said Miss Henrietta Stang, over the back fence to Mrs. Judge Tubman, "but according to all reports, it's what he said himself that started the talk!—young Lester Pinney is going to the dogs just as fast as he can! Why, he owned up to Gilbert Pine, and Gil told 'Lias Turner, and 'Lias told Amzi Sussions, and Amzi told it to one of the Bump twins, and the Bump twin told it to Mary Ella Teeters—he's engaged to her, you know, so it was perfectly proper that he should—and she told it to me; that when Lester was up to the city last week he made a practice of running around of nights till ten or 'leven o'clock, and one day he stood right in front of a saloon and saw one o' them giddy chorus girls ride by in an automobile, and she winked at him!—he wasn't any farther away from her either, than from your front door to the gate! And all his folks are such nice people, too!"

IN TWO THOUSAND AND FIVE

By Harold Eyre

“I KNOW I’m a brute to have told you,” he went on remorsefully, “you, of all women, but I couldn’t keep it in any longer. I have fought against the feeling, but it has been steadily growing too strong for me, and now I’m never happy when you are out of my sight. I want you all to myself, and I have a wild desire to defy convention and let the whole world know that you are the one woman I care for.”

She smiled sadly and shook her head.

“After all,” he continued impetuously, “it isn’t the first time a man has fallen in love under such circumstances. We’re only human. Why not live our lives without regard to social conventions?”

“Jack,” she said, with gentle firmness, “you know the thing is impossible. You speak bravely, but what of the ostracism, the public scorn which would follow as soon as it became known that you had fallen in love with your own wife! Society will forgive almost anything nowadays, but not that.”

The man’s brow clouded, and he sat for a time in thought. Presently his face cleared. “Why couldn’t we go away,” he suggested hopefully, “and settle down by ourselves in some spot where no one would know us?”

“I’m afraid that wouldn’t do,” was her answer. “Some men might be happy leading such a life, but not you. You are too sensitive. You would

soon tire of hiding your disgrace among strangers. And when, sooner or later, you chanced to meet an old friend—one always does, you know, if one has anything to conceal—then would come the inevitable reaction, and you would realize that you had made too great a sacrifice.”

“You have a fatally clear way of putting things,” he remarked disconsolately. “I wish we had been born a hundred years or so ago. In those days, if a husband and wife fell in love with each other, it was regarded merely as a harmless eccentricity.”

“Our ancestors,” she observed, “had many quaint customs which we have outlived. But in this twenty-first century—”

“Hang the twenty-first century!” he interrupted savagely. “Why should it interfere with us? Oh, cruel Fate! To think that I should be married to the woman I love! If only you were another man’s wife, or I some other woman’s husband! Then we could be happy, and society would approve. Alas! what are we to do?”

“There is one thing left,” she suggested thoughtfully.

“What is that?”

“The divorce court. After divorce, you know, even husbands and wives may be fond of each other without impropriety.”

He looked at her in admiration.

“Of course!” he exclaimed joyfully. “Why didn’t I think of that before! We may be happy yet, in spite of all!”

EUNICE

By Anna McClure Sholl

IN a room of a villa on the slopes of Fiesole a young girl sat writing. Eighteen or nineteen years of age, at most, she was of a type of beauty which her physical frailty only emphasized. Her features, at once sensitive and reserved, bore signs of a conflict between some inner ideal and life as she found it.

From time to time she raised her head to look over the garden of the villa toward the towers and domes of Florence, lying like a jewel in the valley below. The air, drifting languidly through the window, was heavy with the scent of Spring flowers, spreading in sheets of blue and gold over distant meadows. On such a morning Eunice could always believe that she was happy; and when she was happy it was not difficult to be good.

And, since an event of eight years ago, "being good" had seemed to her a precious and wonderful thing. Though only ten years of age at the time, she had, in an ambiguous, bewildered way, understood the tragedy to which her whole after-life had been set. She had longed then to go away with her father, to follow him into the bleak loneliness of his choice; but her mother, her beautiful, tearful, voluble mother, had kept her and her sister in greedy custody, had poured into their ears a jumbled, unexpurgated story of her wrongs, of their father's base suspicions, of his cruelty to her. She had used many French idioms in this recital, imparting to the narrative an effect at once mysterious and bizarre. Gwendolen, then twelve, had chattered in sympathy, but Eunice, cruelly gifted with the insight of the spirit which is

independent of experience, had held back from the maternal arms and had said, wistfully:

"Why did you want anyone else to love you when my father loved you so much?"

"*Mon Dieu!* What a monster!" her mother had shrieked, "and you but ten! Gwen, my darling, your sister thinks I'm wicked. What a miserable woman I am to have brought such a child into the world!"

At that Gwendolen had thrown herself into her mother's arms, and the two had gazed from the pretty bed, with its decorations of cupids, at alien Eunice, standing an erect, lonely little figure, in the centre of the luxurious room. She had hated the color of pink and the scent of amber from that day.

For the scene had become typical, a prophetic metaphor of the years that followed. Her mother and sister were always apart in a community of sensuous sympathies; herself, Eunice, always alone on a rough road, which seemed to lead her farther and farther from them. Her mother, despite her indulgence of oblique emotion, had retained her position in society, but in its extreme, febrile section, where much was forgiven to a fascinating woman who had the gift of tears, the air of appealing innocence. That her husband, Henry Castleton, after fighting the famous duel, had died in self-imposed exile, presumably of a disengaged outlook on life, had only added piquancy to the lady's charm. Avoiding again the trap of marriage—an institution whose limitations she knew only too well—Maud Castleton had renewed her lovers each season as

she did her wardrobe. To Eunice, they were merged in a generic monotony, their relative importance determined solely by the state of the family treasury, which, since Gwendolen's introduction to society, had been sorely taxed. For Gwendolen's beauty and outward devotion to her mother, her clever refutations of engagements to this and that princeling, her social tact and charm, had made her much in demand; had established, indeed, a rivalry, none the less bitter for being concealed, between her mother and herself. Eunice, moving in the shadow of her sister's glory, accepted the full burden of the domestic responsibilities, but the credit of unselfishness was bestowed upon Gwendolen, who would usually answer an invitation to a house-party with, "We cannot both leave darling mamma." The answer always came promptly. "We must have you, dear, anyway." And Eunice stayed at home.

But this was not altogether a deprivation. To smoke and drink and play cards for money did not seem, to her, inexhaustible forms of amusement; seemed, indeed, when the participants were women, closely allied to the vulgarity of an ugly world, on whose edges she was forced vicariously to live. Not her desire for pleasures, but her struggles toward truer things, seemed thwarted by Gwendolen, the success of whose magnificent lying and constant subterfuge threw doubt on the ethical constitution of the universe.

Eunice appeared to herself at times little more than a ball, tossed from mother to sister at their convenience. Of a home-loving disposition, she had been taken from one European city to another, from one apartment to another, until all reticence of living seemed as unattainable as if they spent their days upon some gaudy stage of vaudeville. And behind the glitter and fallacious gaiety she was conscious always of vague and vast indecencies; of debts that only dishonor could pay; of traffics and barterings which placed human emotions on a level with sham jewelry. Her protests, generally mute, drew

forth taunts. The hatred of the lower for the higher is the most vindictive of all passions, and since her arraignment of her mother, when a child of ten, Eunice had felt more than once the whip of scorn and resentment. Who was she that she should dare judge of what was best for the household!

So the years of restlessness and conflict went on, but the Winter just passed had seemed a kind of oasis in the desert of her bewilderment. Their latest abiding-place, an old villa, near Fiesole, loaned them for a year, was more like a home than any dwelling that Eunice had ever known. Her mother and sister hated it, because it represented a tedious period of enforced economy—a vacuum between the end of the patience and purse of one set of friends and the beginning of the enthusiasm of new and credulous supporters; but to the third member of the family its silence and seclusion and country peace were like a strain of tender music after the harshness of street noises. She loved its ancient, formal garden, its stately rooms with their fading frescoes, the dignity of its sparse furniture, the monastic aspect of its halls and corridors. On the walls of her own bedroom a company of saints, with aureoles long-dimmed, moved in dream-like procession to some unseen goal. In the faint light of early dawn her eyes rested first on these pale, exalted faces, and she felt companioned.

But her pleasure in her surroundings was not wholly derived from the impersonal. The English and American colony in Florence that Winter included several people who seemed to Eunice to belong to a graver and more solid world than any she had yet known. Prominent among them were two, in whom her fancy dwelt always lovingly—Arthur Burton and his mother, Lady Mary. The latter belonged to the type of woman who knows her world and yet preserves without visible armor her own ideals. Meeting the Castletons one day at an afternoon tea, she had been drawn by more than a passing fancy to Eunice, whose wistful eyes and

nun-like manner set her apart from her assured family in an appealing isolation. A friendship had sprung up between the older and the younger woman, to which, for Eunice, an element of romance was added by the presence on its outskirts of Arthur Burton. His careless, indifferent manner told her little; but because he was the son of his mother, she read many virtues into his character. This idealization was reinforced by the knowledge that, though only thirty-six, he had already had a spirited and gallant career in politics. Overwork had led to this Winter of rest and restlessness in Florence.

What Eunice could not see was the cause of his restlessness. After twelve strenuous years, he had at last time for romance—for a passion which bade fair to change the very course of his existence. The woman who inspired it, the wife of an English author of wealth and position, had attracted many but succumbed to none.

His love for her, violent and superethical, had led him, in the character of a rival of the social order, toward a plan at once outrageous and dazzling. But on this very road he met one day a child. Before long he became conscious that Eunice's eyes were fixed upon him with trust, and that she was offering him a shy and exquisitely tender homage. He took it because it was sweet, and because a man wearis sometimes of the very force of his passion. To walk with Eunice through the long galleries of the Uffizi or the Pitti, or up the slopes of Fiesole; to talk with her, boyishly, of grave questions found in life or in books, rested and refreshed him. Sometimes she appealed too strongly to the memory of an old life, lost in the fires of the new, and then he would leave her. He did not wish to be turned from the course of his passion. To drive the ship grandly against the rocks was the last nobility left to the mariner in whose ears the siren-song was ringing.

It was of Arthur Burton that Eunice was thinking this morning as she sat by her desk. Nothing as personal and as

definite as love was in her heart, but she wandered on the borderland whose twilights hold treasures unknown to the glare of certainty.

Suddenly a door opened without the preliminary knock, and Gwendolen entered, yawning. Her diaphanous nightgown revealed her white and rounded form. Her abundant hair fell about her shoulders. Her face was pink from sleep.

"Why are you up so early, Eunice? Denise said that you were in the garden two hours ago. Did you meet someone there?" she added mischievously.

Eunice flushed. "That is not my habit."

"Then you've missed its real service. I suppose you went to the little shrine to pray. It's your queer idea of enjoying life."

Her sister was silent.

"What are you going to do today? Denise tells me you've asked two people to luncheon. I hope they're not bores."

"Arthur Burton and his mother are coming."

Gwendolen lifted her pretty brows. Her mouth was set for an instant in a hard line.

"I suppose you imagine, Eunice, that you've captured a man half the mothers in England have their eye on. But let me give you a piece of advice. A man always forgets a woman he can make a fool of."

"Advice? What has advice to do with that last sentence—or with me!"

Gwendolen regarded her contemptuously.

"You are the only person in Florence who doesn't know that Arthur Burton is madly in love with Mrs. Kittridge."

Eunice grew pale.

"I do not believe it," she said slowly. "He is—not—that kind."

"Baby!"

Eunice rose to her feet; one tense hand grasped the back of the chair.

"I repeat that I do not believe it. It is strange, Gwendolen, that you do not go down into the galleries and smear black paint over the Madonnas. Everyone to you is either frail or vile."

If people are good you think they must be either fools or hypocrites."

"Or both," Gwendolen added with a smile. "What I do hate are persons that pretend to an exalted holiness when, in their hearts, they want just what the rest of the world wants—money and place and a good time. I sometimes think your ardors of prayer are as much a matter of the flesh as other girls' romances, only you seek a heavenly lover because you don't attract men."

Eunice said nothing. She stood rigidly, pressing her thin hands together, and endeavoring to subdue a rising wave of dark and choking anger. For the last six months emotion of any kind had depleted her physical strength. She knew that she could not afford to be angry.

"I do not seek substitutes in religion for what I may be missing in this world," she answered coldly. "What I've been trying for is just decency and common honor. I wish some days that I could go and work in the fields and live a simple, sane, quiet life. I am tired—I am fearfully tired."

She sank into her chair, and leaned her forehead for a moment on the desk. Gwendolen shrugged her shoulders.

"I hope you do not say these ridiculous things to Arthur Burton. One would think that mamma and I beat and starved you."

"Is my way of living any more ridiculous than yours?"

"Well, at least mine makes me happy. Yours doesn't. You are always desiring the impossible, and you never see things as they are. Arthur Burton is no saint. He is a man of the world."

"Let us not talk about it," Eunice answered wearily. "Why should you care what I think? You have everything you want."

"I simply do not wish you to put mamma and me in a silly light by your childish fancies. I am willing to bet you my sapphire ring that Artie Burton will win—and carry her off before the end of the month."

"You mean—go away—with—her?"

"Of course. He is not the temperament to share his possessions."

Eunice made no reply. With an impatient gesture Gwendolen turned and went back to her own room, where she found her coffee placed before the open wood fire. As she sipped it, she thought jealously of the coming visitors. After all, Arthur Burton might be securing his future, while enjoying his present. Eunice, with her impossible ideals and saintly look, might capture a man of his temperament—just insular enough to want a wife of ice, a nun for the mother of his children. The idea of Eunice's making a brilliant match was extremely repugnant. Gwendolen, with all her flirtations, had not been able to accomplish as much.

"She shall not have them," she said sullenly. "She has no right to ask them here when mamma is away."

She sat for a moment in deep thought. Then she rose and went to her writing-desk.

Arthur Burton, in his riding clothes, paused on the threshold of the room in which his mother sat. For the past month he had found himself wishing more than once that their community of sympathy did not include a too keen understanding of each other's moods. He could not altogether conceal from her the outward and visible signs of the struggle that was going on within him—the conflict between passion—between the primitive man—and certain principles of honor which reckoned not alone with his individual life but with the class of which he was a member. Political duties called him back to England. The traditions of his house, dearer to him than he cared to acknowledge, were in the road of what he intended to do on the morrow, yet he realized that a miracle, and not principle, must save him—and in miracles he did not believe. The intoxication of his coming triumph included too many elements of the unusual for him to abandon his journey into the world of unrecognized romance. He had demanded everything, and on the

morrow everything was to be his. She would leave husband and children for him now that he had ridden roughshod over her conscience, had hushed her protests with his kisses. She would come to him unafraid and unashamed —scornful of petty subterfuges. His imagination already dwelt on their journey to Venice; on the boat with red sails that should carry them to the little island where in an old villa they could enter upon their heritage of joy and pain. Both knew that they should suffer, but to be together——!

He shivered and hid his eyes for a moment with his hand. His mother looked up and smiled.

"You've come back to dress, and after all we're not going."

"And why?"

"I have just received a note from Gwendolen Castleton saying that her sister had been suddenly called to Genoa where their mother is. I am afraid that most of the family burdens rest on Eunice's shoulders."

"It's a beastly shame. But what chance has she with that rapacious mother and sister!"

"And most people think Gwendolen's an angel because she looks like one. I suppose she will go her mother's way."

"Is it a question of futurity?" her son answered drily. "Well, I'm sorry the luncheon is off. I should like to have seen the little girl again."

His mother looked up inquiringly.

"You are not going back to London?"

"Oh, no," he said with embarrassment, conscious of self-betrayal; "but if she's in the clutches of Madame Mère it may be a long time before she gets back."

"I wish she could marry happily," his mother said. "I think she would bloom like a flower brought from a dark cellar."

"She does live in a mephitic kind of atmosphere," he answered. "Well, do we lunch at home?"

"I suppose so. You look tired this morning. Is anything going wrong?"

"Nothing at all, but these Italian

Springs are enervating. I may go over to Venice for a few weeks' change."

"Everybody is flitting," his mother commented. "I heard this morning that Mrs. Kittridge is joining her husband in Russia."

"Indeed! what a bore for the poor lady. Kittridge is such an ass!"

He turned away and went leisurely upstairs to his dressing-room. He hoped that his voice had been steady.

The afternoon found him walking restlessly up the slopes that led to Fiesole. This interval of waiting was almost unendurable. He wished that little Eunice was home. The thought of her was like a cool hand laid on his brow. He wondered what would become of her, and whether it would not be best if the soul in the frail body would "early slip its sheath."

The sun was hot and bright, and after a while he left the highroad for a winding lane. At the first turning a marble bench was placed, and on it was seated a figure which seemed the very duplicate of Eunice's, but the face under the broad-brimmed hat was partially concealed. Burton quickened his steps. As he approached, the girl lifted her head. It was Eunice. Her eyes were dark and heavy as if with recent weeping. She looked as white as her gown. She greeted him coldly, and Burton, remembering the note, at once stiffened. Such a girl's trick to break an engagement he could overlook so far as he was concerned, but he resented the courtesy to his mother. He bowed with a slightly ironic smile.

"You are swiftly returned from Genoa, mademoiselle."

Her astonished look told him much.

"From Genoa?" she repeated.

"Yes; your sister wrote us that you had been called to Genoa."

She gazed at him as if she feared to believe what he said.

"You mean this morning?"

"Of course," he answered with a touch of impatience.

She looked stupefied; then, as if

physical weakness overcame her, she sank down on the bench.

"Gwendolen—wrote—that?"

"Yes—to my mother."

"And that—is why you—didn't—come?"

"Yes."

"I waited—waited—and that is why you—didn't come."

Her voice was hoarse and labored. For a moment she buried her face in her hands; then she rose, her eyes full of an ominous light. It seemed to him in that moment that she grew taller, that she was suddenly swept out of childhood with a threatening maturity. The slender little hands were clenched as if they closed on steel.

"I thank you for telling me this. Will you kindly explain it to Lady Mary, and tell her I shall see her soon?"

"Where are you going?" he asked anxiously.

"Home."

"May I walk with you?"

"No."

The word was like a door closed on his face, but he saw that she had no thought of him. Something in her aspect alarmed him. It was that of a person whose endurance had come to an end. Yet she was strangely quiet. He did not attempt to detain her. He knew that it would be useless.

Gwendolen was taking her afternoon nap in the perfumed twilight of her bedroom. A wood fire was burning on the hearth, for, though the Spring day was sultry, the rooms of the villa still held the chill of Winter, and Gwendolen was as fond of warmth as a cat. The girl lay, rosy and contented, under a satin quilt. At the foot of the bed a new gown was spread out—a Paris "creation" she was to wear to a dance that night.

She had fallen into a deep slumber from which she was aroused by the touch of tense, ice-cold fingers. Opening her eyes drowsily she saw Eunice bending over her; at first she could not realize that it was Eunice, for her face was hard and unfamiliar.

"What is the matter? What do you want?" she said crossly.

"You wrote to Lady Burton that I had gone to Genoa," came the answer in a measured, metallic voice that seemed to issue from a machine.

"Well, what of it? You shouldn't ask people here when mamma is away. Don't look like that—can't you take a joke?" she added feebly, feeling a sudden chill of fright and apprehension.

"You beast—you coward—you devil!"

The delicate arms had become as strong as steel. They held the cowering girl in a vise-like grip. An old, old, terrible face, lit with two blazing eyes looked down for a moment in silence, then with a wild wrench Eunice tore her sister from the bed and rained blows upon her shoulders. Throwing her at last with all her strength to the floor, she seized the ball gown and tore the delicate fabric into strips and cast it into the fire. The flames roared up, and as they did so the dreadful light faded from Eunice's eyes. She stood crouching and whimpering by the bed, too frightened even to scream; then, as one who comes out of the spasms of nightmare, she stretched her arms toward some invisible deliverance, the sweat pouring from her forehead, dark lines about her open, quivering mouth. She backed toward the wall, a look of utter defeat, of unendurable misery slowly creeping over her face. Gwendolen saw the look and it restored her courage. She rose and faced her sister; then, keeping an eye on her, walked toward the door. On the threshold she paused, and with a hysterical laugh screamed out,

"Saint—saint—saint!"

A shudder passed through Eunice. The mocking laughter died away, but she stood motionless against the wall, staring and seeing nothing. All her life she had struggled and prayed, only to be at last—a murderer! She had wanted to kill Gwendolen. She had destroyed her gown as a very symbol of this desire.

"Murderer!—murderer!"

It was the echo to her sister's cry. Suddenly all the blood in her veins seemed to surge to her lips in a hot,

frightful stream. For a moment everything grew black about her. When she came to herself she saw that the front of her gown was stained with crimson.

A few hours later she was lying on her bed in her own room. The physician had left her, promising to return in the morning. She had earnestly pleaded with him to send no word to her mother, and to make light of her illness to her sister. Since the scene of the afternoon, Gwendolen had kept away, busying herself, so Eunice's old nurse told her, with her preparations for the dance.

"Will you tell her I should like to see her?"

The message came back that this was impossible. Eunice heard it with mingled relief and suffering. Even as a child it had been like the sundering of soul and body to say "I am sorry" to her sister. Yet someone must take these words from her lips, or the night would be haunted with crimson shapes, claiming fellowship with her—ugly forms with stains on their hands. Italy for centuries had been full of them; and they would rise from their graves to claim her, assassins and cutthroats, all the brood of the uncontrolled who had followed the glare of hate, till they fell into the pit whence it rose.

She tried to fix her mind on the placid, holy faces of the saints and martyrs in the silent galleries of the city below. She had forfeited her right to aspire to their communion, but the thought of them might quiet a little the dreadful clamor in her ears. For a while she was able to forget the voices, to shut out the visions, but only by an effort of will that increased her exhaustion. And the terror came again, creeping, creeping in! She must tell—she must tell of her wickedness. Through the long, feverish hours her heart had cried out for one, only one person in all the crowds that had surged without meaning about her troubled life.

"Jane!"

The woman rose from her place before the fire.

"Yes, my lamb."

"I want you"—the words came heavily and slowly—"to go down into Florence—to find Mr. Arthur Burton. Tell him I am ill and wish to see him—bring him with you."

"But I cannot leave you, Miss Eunice!"

"Let Marie come—I'll do very well—let her sit outside the door."

"But my lamb!"

"Go—go!"

When the nurse had gone Eunice felt more peaceful. It seemed to her as if the frescoed saints came down from the walls, and drew near the bed and smiled upon her. She wanted to tell them of her great sin, but she could find no voice.

And by-and-bye Arthur came, and he too joined that gracious company, but he seemed distressed and sorrowful. She thought that she said to him, that she of all Florence did not believe the evil story of his love, and then he smiled, and the trouble faded from his eyes.

At last, through her confusions, she heard a firm, quick step. Suddenly the room was empty save for two familiar figures. Jane was coming toward the bed, and with her was Arthur Burton. He took Eunice's outstretched hand in both of his and bent over her, trying to keep from his face his apprehension at the sight of hers.

"Dear child—this is hard luck!"

"It was so good of you to come."

"Nothing could have kept me away. You've been in my mind all afternoon. I felt that something was wrong."

"Everything!" she answered wearily.

He drew a chair to the bedside.

"Are you better?" he said. "You have no pain?"

She shook her head.

"I have something I must tell—I can't sleep till I tell."

"But it will tire you."

"Nothing can tire me—now."

She turned her head from him a moment, looking into the shadows with a strained gaze. Her fingers clasped and unclasped on his. He

watched her intently, reading in her face some tragedy, which he connected vaguely with their meeting in the afternoon. The servant's silence as to the cause of her young mistress's illness had supplemented his own anxious conjectures. He had not realized the depth of his affection for Eunice until now, as he witnessed her strange overthrow, the burden upon her of incommunicable pain. He wanted to put his arms about her and shield her from the darkness that she feared.

"Wait until morning," he said soothingly.

"It is far away."

"It will come before you know it, dear."

She shook her head.

"I must tell—or my dreams will be terrible. Today when you told me what Gwendolen had done, I came back here—I beat her—I tore her ball dress and threw it into the fire. The anger brought on the hemorrhage. This I had to tell—this!"

His hold on her hand tightened, but he said not a word.

"I wanted all my life to be good. I tried—I struggled, but it has been in vain."

"Don't think of it," he entreated. "Think of the happy things, Eunice—of the day we went to Siga."

"It seems so long ago."

"How bright the sun shone!—We found the first violets."

"I see it all through—blood."

"You are feverish—dear."

She shook her head.

"I came to my great test, and I failed!"

For the misery in her voice he had no answer. He gazed silently into the eyes from which a soul near the borderland was looking.

"I am drowsy—would you stay awhile?"

"I shall not leave you, Eunice."

"I can't even pray; I'm too tired. Gwendolen will forgive me if she has a good time at the dance."

She spoke wistfully. He did not

break the silence that followed. After a while she turned her head on the pillow and her eyes gradually closed.

The hours slipped by. Before Arthur Burton his whole life passed in vivid, quickly-changing pictures—his aspirations, his ambitions, his early impossible dreams of recovered chivalry, of the accomplishment of great purposes—he felt again the thrill of them. Looking down at Eunice in her deep and death-like sleep, he knew what she had sought for, and lost. Again and again her words went through his mind as a kind of supernal chorus to the march of his own destiny.

"I came to the great test—and I failed."

He became conscious at last that the hand he held was very cold. Even by the faint light of the fire he could see the change in the face. He bent over and put his hand above her heart. It had ceased to beat. She had passed from sleep to death so quietly that he, preoccupied with a strange conflict, had taken no note. She lay dead of her defeat, but he was still in the weary battle. Could he carry no banner for her that beyond the wall of death she might yet feel the thrill and wonder of victory?

He rose and woke the nurse sleeping in her chair by the fire. When she knew what had happened, her cry pierced sharply the stillness of the room. He laid a hand on her arm.

"You will not weep when you see her face."

When he left the house the moon had risen, bathing the terrace and garden in a cold and spectral light. Why had he gone to that abode of death and defeat? Why had he received and accepted the burden of her unattained ideal?

At the gate he paused and gazed in the direction of Venice. A boat with red sails swept lightly toward a fairy island. He watched it, full of the anguish of those who conquer, until it was a mere speck in the distance. He waved to it a gesture of farewell.

LE SACRIFICE

Par Jean Reibrach

LES dix-huit ans de Marthe, sa beauté délicate, n'émurent pas d'abord André Lourdel. La même disgrâce physique qui, en déformant sa taille, l'avait écarté de la médecine et résigné à une modeste pharmacie de village, le détournait également du mariage et de l'amour. Mais la sympathie éveillée en lui par la tristesse de la jeune fille s'accrut de jour en jour, à mesure qu'elle lui en laissa pénétrer les causes.

Mlle Dollet, receveuse de la poste, faisait expier durement à cette parente orpheline la charité dont elle avait usé en la recueillant. Elle laissait à Marthe le travail de bureau, et lui imposait des labeurs de servante, et surtout, égoïste, avare, d'une nature jalouse qu'aigrissait encore, avec l'âge, une santé chancelante, elle aggravait cet esclavage par d'aigres reproches, par de continues défiances, d'abominables suspicions, parfois des actes, des paroles, des pensées même de la jeune fille.

Ce jour-là, sans doute, une scène plus cruelle s'était produite. André Lourdel, en s'accoudant au guichet de la poste, vit que Marthe avait pleuré.

Ils étaient seuls. Il s'écria:

— Encore! Que vous a-t-elle fait?

Marthe hésita. Mais la sympathie du jeune homme était la seule douceur qu'elle rencontrât dans sa détresse. Elle se pencha et, baissant la voix:

— C'est une lettre, dit-elle, qu'elle a surprise!

— Une lettre?...s'étonna André.

Marthe, d'un petit sourire, s'excusa:

— Oui! Oh! je puis bien vous dire tout, n'est-ce pas.

Se penchant un peu plus, baissant encore la voix, elle confia avec simpli-

cité une idylle ancienne déjà. Un ami d'enfance qu'elle épouserait un jour. Leur pauvreté les séparait. Albert, le jeune homme, débutait à peine dans son emploi modique. En attendant, ils s'écrivaient en cachette. Et une des lettres, justement, était tombée aux mains de Mlle Dollet, à qui Marthe avait dû tout avouer.

L'emoi, où se trouvait elle-même la jeune fille, l'entrée dans le bureau, ensuite, de la receveuse, permirent à André de dissimuler son saisissement. Il jeta une phrase banale et se retira.

A présent seulement, il découvrait toute la subtile douceur dont sa vie avait été fleurie par la présence de Marthe. Sa sympathie, c'était de l'amour et il en connaissait la grandeur, tout à coup, à la grandeur même de sa souffrance. La pensée, du moins, que ce mariage ne dût se réaliser que dans un avenir éloigné, incertain, lui fut un apaisement. Non qu'il espérât. Mais Marthe, longtemps encore, peut-être, demeurerait près de lui. Puis cette souffrance même dont il était torturé n'était-elle pas tout ce qu'il pouvait espérer de l'amour? Ne l'avait-il pas éprouvé déjà, autrefois, vagues sans objet, lorsque quelque glace, au passage, le raillait du reflet de son image? Et pour être plus vive aujourd'hui, ne recélait-elle pas cependant une sorte de joie amère — joie pourtant! — d'être réelle, précise, et de lui venir de Marthe?

La compassion qu'il était accoutumé de témoigner pour les chagrinés de la jeune fille, expliqua les jours suivants son air sombre et affligé. Il trouva le courage de continuer à recueillir les confidences de Marthe. Et sa pitié,

une fois encore se raviva en présence du supplice qu'elle endurait.

La pensée des joies du mariage qui lui avaient été refusées exaspérait encore la jeunesse et la beauté de Marthe. Elle se complaisait à salir cet amour, à l'avilir, l'incriminant bassement ainsi qu'un vice infâme. Elle avait trouvé enfin la blessure à faire, à renouveler, à entretenir toujours saignante, et elle s'y acharnait avec une volupté féroce, inlassable. Sa surveillance, en même temps, se faisait plus étroite. Guettant, de peur que le jeune homme vint rôder autour de la maison, elle n'accordait plus à la jeune fille aucune sortie. L'hiver était venu, rendant mornes les champs déserts et la route où passaient les courriers boueux. Marthe n'avait même plus la brève détente des minutes où elle respirait, l'été, dans le petit jardin dont elle aimait les fleurs. Le froid qui enivahissait le bureau, souvent ouvert à tous les vents pour le service,acheva de l'abattre. Elle pâlit, déclina, et les rares sourires où elle s'efforçait encore étaient plus navrants que n'étaient autrefois ses larmes.

André, alors, se reprocha son égoïsme. Il s'oublia lui-même et des besoins de dévouement se levèrent du fond de son cœur. Que Marthe partit, qu'elle épousât Albert, tout, plutôt que cette immense douleur qui la consumait, élargissant autour de ses yeux de fièvre ce cerne bleu et creusant ses joues pâlies! La santé, le bonheur de la jeune fille lui devinrent nécessaires.

D'eux seulement, lui-même, peut-être recueillerait un peu de joie encore. Il ne s'y résignait plus, il les désirait. Mieux, il les voulut. Etouffant une dernière révolte, il offrit:

— C'est l'argent qui vous sépare d'Albert? Moi, sans être bien riche, peut-être je pourrais?... Ne suis-je pas assez votre ami pour vous aider?...

Mais Marthe:

— Je vous remercie! je ne puis accepter.

Et elle se hâta d'expliquer:

— Oh! ce n'est pas à cause de vous, ni pas orgueil! Mais ma tante m'a recueillie. Sans elle, à ce moment, que sarais-je devenue? La quitter a pré-

sent que l'âge l'affaiblit, que des infirmités la menacent?... Songez qu'elle ne saurait même plus tenir son bureau, Il lui faudrait prendre une aide, se mettre à la merci d'une étrangère!.. Puis l'aide coûterait, et elle non plus n'est pas riche!

La stupeur d'André Lourdel l'empêcha de répondre aussitôt. Le dévouement où il avait pensé s'élever lui apparaissait si petit auprès du sacrifice de la jeune fille qu'il demeurait comme écrasé. Il se récria enfin, effrayé et indigné à la fois:

— Mais elle peut vivre dix ans!

— J'attendrai! dit Marthe avec un sourire résigné.

Et elle ajouta:

— En ce moment encore elle est souffrante! Comment la priverais-je de mes soins?

L'hiver, en effet, déprimait aussi la receveuse. La reprise d'une maladie de cœur l'alita. Mais l'impuissance où elle se vit alors la rendit plus terrible. Clouée dans son lit, elle redoutait de Marthe quelque trahison, une fuite peut-être... Nécessaire au bureau, la jeune fille, continuellement, devait monter l'étage, rappelée par l'impérieuse sonnette de la malade. Elle lui reprochait sa lenteur, ses retards, l'accusait de se réjouir de son mal et de désirer sa mort, allait parfois jusqu'à examiner les potions d'un air soupçonneux ou à inspecter les aliments. Et ni la fatigue des journées rudes ni les nuits sans sommeil ne suspendaient ses exigences.

Au contraire, vu son âpre désir de vivre, elle regardait du fond de ses yeux aigus, pâlir et décliner la jeune fille, comme si cette jeune vie qu'elle usait, qu'elle dévorait peu à peu, eût pu passer en elle et lui faire un sang nouveau.

L'angoisse croissante d'André Lourdel un matin arriva jusqu'à l'épouvanter. Marthe, qui venait à la pharmacie chercher une potion, était si brisée qu'elle se laissa tomber, défaillante, sur une chaise. Il s'écria:

— Mais c'est de la folie!.. Elle vous tue!

Le geste faible, résigné, de la jeune fille, acheva de le révolter. Il n'ex-

istait pas, pour lui, maintenant, d'autre souffrance que la souffrance de Marthe. Et cette souffrance, à la fois, devenu intolérable, au-dessus de ses forces, soulevait en lui un désir immense, éperdu, de salut, de bonheur, pour elle. Lui, il ne comptait plus. Le renoncement, même, ce n'était plus assez! Il aurait donné sa vie... il aurait commis un crime!... Et, pourtant, que faire, qu'imaginer, puisqu'elle ne voulait pas être sauvée?... puisque, cette fois encore, elle semblait dire, de son pâle sourire:

—Qu'importe?

Écrire à Albert?... L'aller chercher?...

Une pensée immobilisa André Lourdel. Il se sentit pâlir et un petit frisson couvrit sa nuque. Le geste qui sauverait Marthe se découvrait à lui tout à coup. Geste affreux, abominable—ah! et encore qui savait?... héroïque, peut-être! Une erreur de dose, quelques gouttes ajoutées à la formule—où encore...

Le regard d'André Lourdel, involontairement, s'était porté sur l'armoire aux poisons. Il était, à cette minute, le maître de la destinée. Et la vision, dans un éclair, passa: la vieille fille s'éteignant sans qu'un soupçon pût s'éveiller... Marthe épousant celui qu'elle aimait!...

Les jambes d'André, pourtant, tremblaient sous lui, et une sueur légère mouilla son front. Il s'obstina à espérer

er encore. Un dernier effort le ramena vers Marthe.

—Croyez-moi! Je vous en prie, je vous en conjure. Partez!...

Marthe, en secouant la tête, l'interrompit:

—Non, refusa-t-elle, je ne dois pas! Un moment, André Lourdel hésita. Il ricana:

—Le devoir?... le devoir?...

Allait-il donc laisser mourir Marthe?

De ces deux existences, de l'abominable vieille, et de Marthe, celle de la jeune fille n'était-elle pas la plus précieuse, la plus sainte?

Il n'ajouta plus rien. Il se faisait en lui, peu à peu, un grand silence. Le crime, sans profit, laissait sa conscience sereine. Calme, résolu, il ouvrit une armoire, il prit un flacon, il versa. Il avait les mêmes gestes mesurés que les autres fois. Même, amèrement un peu, il souriait presque en songeant à son amour, que jamais Marthe ne saurait pas plus que son crime héroïque, et au bonheur aussi qu'elle lui devrait, dont son propre cœur, et ses remords mêmes seraient la rançon cachée.

La potion était prête. Il l'étiqueta, l'enveloppa. Puis, simplement, tristement, comme d'habitude, il dit:

—Voici, mademoiselle!

Et Marthe sortit, emportant le Destin.



HIS FINISH

ONCE upon a time a man started to save money for a rainy day. Soon he had accumulated \$7.85, with which he bought a beautiful umbrella.

Then the rainy day came. But the man's best friend had borrowed the umbrella the night before.



HE KNOWS HIS BUSINESS

HOWELL—That undertaker is not so friendly with the doctor.

POWELL—No, he is cultivating the acquaintance of a chauffeur.

THE CLOSED DOOR

By Mary Glascock

THE electric lamps had just been lighted, and through the soft patter of early Autumn rain Mrs. Norrington looked out upon the street.

For half an hour she had paced the length of the drawing-room, impatiently stopping every few minutes at the window to glance down the blurred perspective of dripping buildings at the passing procession of umbrellas.

What could be keeping Ward? A grip of dread contracted the muscles of her heart. A shadow—vague, intangible, crept stealthily into the room and thickened the air about her. He had never been late before, and there was the Browning play that evening; they had studied the text together last night. His insight was marvelous. He had a trick of falling into the writer's mood. A proud smile curved the straight of her lips. He was *her* son.

The grayness of the shadow which, in the satisfaction of reminiscence had edged away, fell again on her heart as the rain fell on the window-pane. She tried to shake herself free from its gathering darkness, and an irritated frown furrowed her smooth forehead. Suppose—suppose—and all the black devils that ride a woman's imagination in closing twilight mounted to her eyes, and fear looked from them as she parted the curtains and stood motionless, waiting.

John Norrington's key had clicked in the lock an hour ago. She had not turned her head. He had mounted the stairs; she had forgotten his presence; but Ward—

Her fingers fumbled at the flowers thrust in her belt, the violets that he had sent her early in the day, and she walked again, rebellious color surging in anger to her cheeks that senseless foreboding should disturb the placidity of her evenly balanced mind.

She summoned a maid to light a lamp, and, book in hand, sat calmly under the circle of its glow. There was something very youthful in her gray-gowned figure, youthful in her face molded in fine, clean lines, which the shaded lamp accentuated. There was something positively girlish in the tall, lithe figure to which maturity had added simply good poise without deducting the soft curves of youth. Ward was proud of his young mother, and it was an amusing joke to them to be taken for brother and sister. They were so in accord, Margaret Norrington's thoughts ran on, ignoring the text of the book. By mistake she had picked up one of John's "distractions," a story lurid of cover and tale. "One of your father's weaknesses," she had excused, a trifle scornfully, to Ward.

The buzzing of the electric bell startled the stillness. Mrs. Norrington dropped the book, listened, and then, recognizing its identity, pushed it to the floor, spurning it with her slippers foot, and waited, her thin white fingers twisting about each other until the jewels of her rings left red marks dented in her flesh.

Brown seemed interminably long at the door, fussing over something. If she could spring up and rush to the door herself, but convention—convention bred in the bone and coffined in a long line of narrowed ancestry—

held her to her place. The shadow had sombered to blackness, and she no longer tried to hide the fear born of this cloying, smothering dread that stared from her eyes.

Brown entered the room, a letter on his salver.

"A note, ma'am, by special messenger. No answer," he solemnly announced.

Mrs. Norrington surprised herself by the calmness with which she took the note, held it in her hand, and waited for Brown to leave.

The shadow over her heart grew big while she read her name in Ward's handwriting. She pressed a button and flooded the room with light. Massive cabinets of carved Italian workmanship and chairs of Sheraton and Chippendale, great pictures by great masters, bronzes, Barye's own, stood out like objects on a shore-line to sailors beating in from sea. Even then the shadow grew, and in the glittering light she felt only gloom, saw and heard gibbering shapes that skulked and mocked in corners—intangible shapes begot of shadow and pain.

Something regal was in the woman's pose as she stood straight, under the light, and opened the letter, passing her hand over her eyes as if to brush the shadow from her sight.

The flowers at her belt nauseated her; the sense of long-remembered perfume over a coffin stole upon her, and she flung them away loathingly. With lips paled to the hue of the paper in her hand, she read, laid the note down, and rang for a maid.

"I have a headache. I shall not dine tonight. Tell Mr. Norrington I do not wish to be disturbed, and give him this." She dropped the note into the maid's hand as if it burnt.

Waiting for the footsteps to die down the hall, Mrs. Norrington went toward the stairway, fashioned after one in an old Italian palace. She and Ward had designed it from remembrance. As she moved, the shadow moved with her. Her face and figure shrank under the darkness of its malevolence. She now looked her years, and each year a heavy

one. Rejecting the balustrade, she groped her way as one unseeing, bewildered in the dark, afraid. No sound came from her lips except, as she stumbled on the upper step, a low, inarticulate cry as of a wounded, trapped, wild thing. With hands pressed against the wall to find the way, she reached her room.

Clutching the window-sill, she stared out at the rain, which, with the rising of the wind, now dashed in torrents against the pane. There was no light in the room: there was no light for Margaret Norrington in all the world that night. In this enveloping shadow of darkness, the wash of the rain, the grating of the wind, the whip of the strong, tall trees in the garden blended in one great shudder. Her own cry came back to her as the cry of a lost soul engulfed in the inferno of wind, and rain, and blackness. Rigid as iron she stood, her whole body one throbbing, pulsing nerve of feeling. All senses were merged into one, to make that one stronger, to increase the suffering manifold. A maid tiptoed to the door. No answer, and she stole away. Whisperings, stealthy and low, sounded in consultation. Another tap. A tray clattered as it was set down by unseen hands. The woman did not turn from the blankness of the window; she might have been insensate clay for any sign she made.

"Margaret!" John Norrington called. She made no answer. "Margaret!" His hand turned the knob of the door. She sprang to lock it, but he had entered. He touched a button, and out of the blackness her face came forth, gray and old, the nostrils sharpened, the mouth drooped and bitter, cheeks haggard and hollow—a mask of the woman who had been. "Margaret!" he exclaimed in shocked surprise. "You're ill. I'll go for Anna and telephone for the doctor."

"John," her voice cut cold and hard, "I shall trouble you to put out the light. I believe I left word with Anna that I was not to be disturbed."

"But, Margaret—surely—the boy—"

"I have no son, John Norrington."

"You can't help his being ours." The cry was a protest and an entreaty.

"I believe that my orders were, not to be disturbed," she repeated wearily.

Over his game of solitaire, before the fire in the library, John Norrington sat thinking. The letter lay on the low table, as he shuffled and re-shuffled the pack mechanically, laying out the cards. He was a man of few words, but many thoughts. Silent by nature, the devotion and unity of mother and son, to the exclusion of himself, had settled that silence into a habit nurtured of many years, too many to be broken. He had so little place in their lives, was "so little in accord," as Margaret had once carelessly said, that, shoved to one side, he had without protest sunk to a simple necessity, ministering to their material wants.

But the silent man before the fire might have startled them with his musings if he had chosen to give them expression. For long, silent evenings are rank soil for vigorous thought, the very repression of expression favoring larger growth. Sensitive, he at first resented this exclusion. Then, with custom, came amusement, but always dominated by strong and loyal love and hope for them. Faith was written large upon him, firm faith in the future. He was a patient man, content to wait, generous enough not to resent misunderstanding.

He picked up the letter and smiled, his thought leaping to his lips, "The boy has more grit than I thought." He nodded, and looked up as the maid set down the tray containing his single glass of amber wine.

"Is—is Mrs. Norrington feeling better?" she ventured in a fluttered way.

"Yes," he answered. "Mr. Ward was married today, and his mother is a bit upset."

The maid's astonishment did not escape his eye as she fled to communicate the news to her fellows below-stairs.

"It's better to speak," he said to himself. "The papers will make a sensation of it in the morning. It might just as well be out."

Gathering the cards together he put them away, and then slowly went up the stairs. The footsteps above were tramping upon his heart in their unceasing restlessness.

"Margaret, I wish you to open the door." His tone took on a new note of insistence. "I must see you to night."

No answer. Then the key slowly turned in the lock.

"There's no use in discussing the matter," she said. "The thing is done. Ward never lies. There's no issue to be met. Ward has seen fit to cut himself loose from me; he must take the consequence. The very fact of his having done so shows his indifference to the result. John, I beg of you, this must be a closed subject between us, and this house, while I am in it, must be closed to him and his."

"But, Margaret, that's impossible. In his father's house the door must always be open to him."

"Then you must choose between us." She stood straight, looking at him with great dark eyes and white face. Her hand touched a book lying open on the table. "The Blot on the Scutcheon"; she read the title aloud in a curious, half-controlled voice, the tone of which rang hollow as if spoken in a vault. She laughed, harsh and jarring, as she took it up. "We were reading this last night. We were to have seen it played tonight. And all the while—" She hid her face in her long, slender hands, which trembled with the vehemence of her feelings. "I can't bear it! It is as if every portion of me—body and soul—had been torn into little, quivering bits, whirling to be freed, yet bound together by pulsing pain."

"Margaret, Ward is our son and he is married—"

"Yes, to a chorus-girl," she flashed with the old fire.

"It is not for you or me to judge. She's Ward's wife."

"You can't feel, you can't know. It is not the same to you—"

He looked at her, a curious smile flickering over the gravity of his face,

and answered nothing. Then, in firm tone, he spoke:

"In his letter he told you what she was. It is not what she does, but what she is, Margaret. You have always said that the quality of rare penetration was his, that he knew instinctively the fine—"

"There is always a gross side to man-nature. I thought—my son—I was deceived—"

"There is a stronger side to man-nature that all the cuddling, superfining of intellect, swaddling in silken texture of culture, cannot smother if he is a man. I have feared its deadening effects upon the boy. I'm glad that he has struggled from the folds."

"You—have—feared!" Half-concealed scorn was in the exclamation.

"Yes." Pity and wistfulness were in the word.

"I have been betrayed in my own house by my own people. You knew! Possibly you helped—and I was blind—blind!" She threw herself into a chair and rested her head on her arms.

"I did not know, Margaret." He came near and made a gesture of placing his hand on her hair, but drew back. "I did not know until you sent me the letter. It was not kind of Ward; it was not manly. There was still an inner muffling of the silken texture left. He is tearing at his wrappings; he will be a man yet. The stuff in him is good. He writes—"

"Spare me the words again." She started. "They are printed in fire upon my brain."

He read unsparingly:

"I turned to Ellen—I have known her for a long time—because she was so wholesome, sweet, so real. In her simple home, she lived an every-day life, straight along, as it came to her—hours unspun of theories. She did her tasks and accepted her pleasure and pain sweetly, as it pleased God to send them to her. Her work was not of her choosing, but was given her to do, and it meant comfort, and more, to a family of brothers and sisters. I was thrown with them—no matter how—and the simplicity of her life charmed me, the simplicity of her character fascinated me. Here were no complex problems to be solved. There was something real about her and hers, an atmosphere to which I had not been accustomed. The

breath of wholesomeness was so clean. Ellen laughed at me at first; I was not used to that. Then she told me of my faults; I had always heard my virtues extolled. In the arrogance of my pride, I had never suspected there were faults. While sometimes it angered me, it interested me—it led me to discover myself. It is refreshing to meet the truth even if truth deals you a knock-out blow. And Ellen was gentle in her blows. She was different. We read together for the joy of reading, the soul in it. We did not stop to dissect and carp, and do you know how much more there is in everything if you take it a little more on faith? And she sings—divinely, like the birds, untrained, but herself is in it.

"This marriage is not of her doing, and it is the only time I have persuaded her against her will. She is a timid little thing, and I told her if she were mine she would be yours. I know you so well, mother dear—"

"That is enough, John." Mrs. Norrington spoke with effort, as if the word strangled her voice. "I"—she raised her head—"we will never speak of it again."

"Good night, Margaret." He looked wistfully at her. "Is there anything you wish?"

"Only to be alone," she answered.

When he went, she was glad of it. The air was stifling; the odor of violets on the table sickening. She threw the window wide open, and the rain beat in, but she did not feel it. Again she walked to and fro, her mind keeping step with her footfalls. The act she might forgive; the humiliation, never.

The night grew cold as the hours dragged on. She did not know nor care. The structure of a lifetime had crumbled at the touch of a woman's finger. How she hated the woman, with the hatred of outraged motherhood! She would tear him from this infatuation, even if it killed him. Uncertain plans feverishly shaped and unshaped themselves in her tortured brain. He had been so much hers. They had lived with but one thought, one ideal, one purpose. They understood. And now—the first beckoning of a stranger he had followed. He was as remote from her as if he lived in another world—more remote than if he were dead. She could not understand this man who wrote, this impetuous schoolboy, maun-

dering page upon page of immature thought, this man who had been wooed by his faults.

Past midnight, the strangeness and emptiness of her room frightened her. Softly she went to his study, where all the material things dear to him were strewn about, waiting for his coming. Books were scattered on his table; cigar ashes lay in little cones all over his desk—he never would be neat. After lighting the study lamp, mechanically she flicked the ashes into the palm of her hand, as she always did, and waited, as she always did, to hear his remonstrating laugh. His presence was so real among his familiar things that she could not shake it off. She had come to seal his room, but lingered and sank into his leather arm-chair, shivering. His very belongings clamored forgiveness for him—the worn riding-cap tossed on the desk, the frayed whip, the hundred and one objects so vitally his.

She steeled her heart as she looked about her, went to the door to close it, but came back, carefully sorted his papers in a drawer and again sat down. An old coat was carelessly thrown across the back of the chair; her head unconsciously leaned on the sleeve. It was as if his arm were about her. She closed her eyes for a moment, giving herself to the feeling. The familiar incense of tobacco rose to her nostrils. His personality was vividly near. It was as if he were pleading with her for himself, for them both, for all.

A terrified look leaped to her face. She put her hands to her ears to stifle the call, the call of blood to blood, child to mother. Her heart pounded with the agony of it. Then she steadied herself, took the key in her hand, and with grim, set face, locked the door.

All night she crouched at her window, not seeing, not feeling. The golden bowl of love is not broken in a moment. The growth of a lifetime was slowly passing under the inexorable flow of fate, and the marks of its erosion were being plainly written on the foundations of her soul. She had closed his

door—but there could be no closed door in her heart.

II

MRS. NORRINGTON sat alone in the library with a volume of Hafiz spread before her, seeking distraction in the book, anything that offered relief to aching thought. This ghazel of Hafiz savored of her philosophy, and she liked it. Truly, the old heathens were the gentlest, bravest, most gallant in their views of life, she mused.

"Take life, like this cup, with a laughing lip even though with a bleeding heart, nor even if thou art wounded lament like a lute." Lifting her head she looked up with unseeing eyes. The eyes were a trifle faded, the light had gone from them, their gray dulled by listless apathy. The proud line of her mouth had hardened, and her tall, lithe figure had edged painfully thin, the curves of grace vanished.

She shivered, and drew a light scarf across her shoulders, stroking the folds as if she liked the feel of the stuff, the nearness of something to her touch, and coughed nervously. The slight sound was flung back to her from far, dim corners, from the wide halls. The emptiness of vacant rooms caught it up, and the shadow of loneliness, spread heavy through the house, chilled her with a cold no fire could warm; and she shivered again in the gray of its dreariness.

She found herself unconsciously listening, straining to hear a step, something that did not tread with noiseless feet. John was so regular—he had no right to be late. She did not care, though, for the philosophy of Hafiz satisfied her, but she had grown used to seeing John bending over his cards before the fire; the monotonous shuffling was soothing. It was the custom she missed, not the man.

After John's first efforts to comfort her, their brief nightly conversations had drifted into the old silence. Lately he had been absenting himself for two or three hours in the evening. She did

not miss him, but her eyes eagerly scanned the clock, and she knew to a minute when he left and when he returned. But she would not question, and he never mentioned where or why he went. Club life had never offered temptation to him, and all through his lonesome years of married life, books, his pipe and his nightly game had seemingly served for companionship. Now this sudden change piqued her, irritated her. Her mind would not be soothed by the philosophy of Hafiz. It was all very well to hold one's head erect before the world, but not at home; home was the place for rest. Her lip curved at the word. She did not know what she wished. None of her old pleasures ministered to her. The things she and Ward had cared for together were empty husks—they, too, were closed as was the room. She and John were no nearer together than a year ago when the door was closed; but, lately, she had not been well, a dizziness unsteadied her head, and—she liked to feel him near—something human, beside the servants in the house. He had no right to try her nerves, which were sadly racked.

A timber creaked. She started from her chair and caught her breath, all a-tremble. That odd pain in her side, insistent in its nagging—the left side—frightened her. She was not well. She had come to loathe the bigness, the stateliness of the old house. To be in touch with nothing, groping through the life around her, befogged, knowing that its sea surged, and dashed, but not for her, to watch for the interminable tomorrows stretching before her, brother to yesterdays that sulked, sullen, long and lonely, into the past—the loneliness, the stark loneliness of it all!

She laid her head on her hand, and a tear trickled, wetting the pages of the old poet's philosophy. She started angrily. She had never been a woman to cry; it was so feminine. Impatiently, she brushed another tear away. She wanted something human—somebody. Would the hours ever shorten?

To her acute, listening ear, a key turned in the lock, a step sounded in the hall. She wanted—John Norrington.

She sat upright, expectant, the thrill of the knowledge flushing her cheeks. A sudden shyness seized her as she watched him enter. The worn furrows of his kindly, strong face cut into her heart. The graying of his hair looked something new. The droop of his patient mouth—everything about him—was crying accusingly to her whose hand had dealt these blows.

He started as his eyes met hers, now luminous with womanly tenderness. Night after night he had found dull listlessness.

"How cold your hands are! They're trembling!" he said as he took them, and, wondering, led her to the fire.

His low table was drawn to its accustomed place, with the cards waiting. It was not late, barely nine.

"I should like to sit on this little stool," she said, turning her face to the blaze, while he settled into his easy-chair.

"Yes, it will be warmer," he said, stirring the coals. Something strange in her attitude bewildered him. "Are you ill, Margaret?" he asked, as he had asked long ago, laying his hand on her hair.

She caught the hand in hers and held it.

"Ill? No, John—" And she looked up into his troubled face. "Ill? No—I'm only so glad to have you here—to have you back—to have you—John!"

"I have been with the children these nights, Margaret," he said simply. "I wish that you would let their happiness be yours. I'm breaking my promise in speaking, I know, but tonight I must tell you; I think you will be happier. Ward knew, when he wrote of Ellen. They are so near to each other, so much! They hardly miss us; but—if you could—"

Tears filled her eyes; she laid her head on his knee.

"Thank God! John, through Ward's closed door—I have found you."

THE LESSER STAIN

By Leila Burton Wells

KENYON had had a long, disappointing day. A Filipino prisoner had given information of some cached rifles in the vicinity of Cavite; and he had ransacked every nipa-shack in the district with little success. The natives were silent, stolid, and uncompromising.

Kenyon hated a failure more than most men; he was tenacious, if nothing else, and this quality, linked to an almost indefatigable energy, made him invaluable to the military powers, who learn to work a man in the tropics for all he is worth, and work him swiftly lest his brain fail, or his hand falter before his task be done.

Kenyon knew the Islands and the people as well as any white man can know them. Three good years of his life had been cast into the pit of conquest. He had lain in water-sloughed trenches by night, and tramped through boggy rice-fields by day. He had fought with the demons of plague; and stared death in the face with the indolence of one who recked not of tomorrow or the day after.

Occasionally, an unconquerable longing seized him to look upon the shores of his native land; to hear soft voices and gentle words; to lift his face to a serene sky where breezes blow cool, and the earth lies basking under a sun whose rays do not burn into a man's soul with all the fires of hell. But these longings were treacherous things to harbor, so he cast them out; and the government apprisingly measured his strength and his days of usefulness, and spared him not at all.

Evening was falling now as he rode along, his trained eye scanning the low

valley with the haze of twilight hanging heavy over it. The opal-tinted waters of the sea lay to his left splashing against the shore with rhythmic music, leaving little embroideries of snowy foam on the smooth sand. The air was burdened with sweet smells; with the pungent odor of salt breezes creeping longingly toward the hot earth, the faint, half-guessed-at scent of orchid blooms, of blistered shrubs and sun-bleached grass.

Kenyon's fagged brain was welcoming the rest of evening. Unconsciously he drooped a little in the saddle, listening lazily to the jingle of the accoutrements, and the dull beat of horses' hoofs. The escort was following slowly. He had a half-defined desire to ride away from it all, to ride on forever—away and away into the gold of the sunset. There was little of the dreamer about him, but he spent most of his tour in the Moro country, with one other white man save himself to eat with, talk with, look at, and—swear at, and he had grown tired of doing all these things. Action alone stimulated him. He lived to fight, and the best part of the fighting was done, though he had asked to be transferred to Cavite, that he might keep in with what there was.

Of late he had begun to wonder if he would welcome a return to civilization; if fine raiment and soft living and fair women would appeal in the old way.

He took out a cigar, and bit off the end reflectively, his eyes considering the green tropical world about him. It was beautiful, he admitted with grudging admiration; but everything

was overdone. The greens were too green, the blues were too blue. It was the superabundance of color which palled. The never-changing, never-ending Summer, sun and rain—how he loathed them! They came and went, and came and went again; and nature made no provision against the destroying monotony. Was it any wonder that men ran mad? That the——?

Something broke the thread of his reflections. What was it? With instinctive caution, he checked his horse, and turned in his saddle; but there was nothing to see, and he had started forward again when suddenly, out of the very bowels of the earth, as it were, a cry was borne. It trembled across the misty fields, and stirred the leaves of the banana palms. Twice it came, shrill and insistent. Someone, or something, was in distress.

With a stifled exclamation, Kenyon dug the spurs into his horse, and the animal sprang forward.

A few yards to the right a dark object lay sprawled on the grass, with a woman's figure huddled beside it!

In an instant the officer had dismounted, tied his horse, and plunged forward. The thing on the grass did not stir, but the woman flung out her arms despairingly.

"I have killed him!" she moaned, with a long wail, as of one bereft. "I have *killed* him!"

Kenyon knelt swiftly down, and felt for the heart. There was not a throb. The man was dead.

He turned the brown, half-naked body over silently, and raised himself to his feet. At the same moment the woman lifted a head burdened with a mass of corn-colored hair, burned in the high lights to fierce gold; lifted a face white as a tropical moonbeam, and eyes blue as a tropical sky.

Kenyon stared at her in stunned, unbelieving amazement. She was an American woman—an American woman alone and unescorted in a place where men dared not venture without a guard! An American woman, with face convulsed with terror and helpless

fingers vainly knotting and unknotting a torn handkerchief.

Kenyon was dumb, while he struggled with his bewilderment. Was she a wraith, a creature of his overwrought fancy, a beautiful chimera, which would vanish at a touch? He stared at her in stupefied awe, his astonishment depriving him of words. What was there to say to this vision of another world, this——?

The girl's eyes, clinging with a wild, undefined hope to his face, were suddenly shadowed with a new emotion.

"What is it?" she gasped with a note of terror in her voice that brought the man to his senses. "Can't you speak? Or are you dumb—as he is?"

"Dumb?" he repeated, somehow finding his voice. "Dumb? No, I am not dumb." As he spoke the whole pitiful situation burst upon him.

To shed blood is, to a woman, a punishment worse than death; he saw the protest against it in the blanched face, the parted, twitching lips, the nervous fingers. He took an instant resolution. Laying his hand on that quiet heart whose blood had pounded against the quickening pulses of life for the last time, he said slowly and decisively:

"*He is still alive!*"

The girl gave a little gasp of incredulous disbelief, and her hands sought her heart as if to still its frantic beating. Something in Kenyon's face must have reassured her, for the color tinged her cheeks and she moved, as if the stunned machinery of her life had suddenly been set into motion.

"I was afraid," she sobbed hysterically, "I was—*afraid!*"

"Afraid—of what?"

"I thought—I was sure, he was dead! See how still he is, how—horrible! Are you sure, *sure*?"

"Quite sure." Kenyon was not ashamed of the lie.

But even as he spoke, the respect for the dead, which belongs to man as a birthright, woke in him an irresistible desire to cover the poor, distorted face with his handkerchief, to straighten out the twisted limbs and close the staring eyes. But he desisted, repeat-

ing his assertion mechanically. And when the girl did not speak he asked in a matter-of-fact voice:

"How did it happen?"

She pushed back the ruff of sunshiny hair from her forehead, her eyes traveling past him to the shadowy copse, burning even in the gloom with gaudy fire-trees.

"How did it happen?" she repeated automatically, with the forced calmness of a person robbed of collected thought. "I—why, I hardly know. He sprang toward me. I was alone, and his face was *fearful*," shuddering. "I had my brother's pistol—and somehow—before I knew it, it had gone off—and he was lying—there!"

As the import of the words was borne upon him, Kenyon suddenly trembled, and the hot blood rushed up behind his eyeballs.

"What were your people thinking of that they allowed you out without a guard?" he choked fiercely. "Didn't you know—did no one tell you the risk you ran?" As she was silent, "Have you any realization of what you have escaped?"

The girl flushed under his glance, and tried to steady her shaking voice. She pointed a mute finger at a pistol half-hidden in the grass.

"I had—that!" she said slowly; and then, as if the sight of the silent weapon of self-defense had snapped her last atom of self-control, her figure collapsed suddenly, and she wrung her hands together, bowing her head over them.

"What shall I do?" she wailed. "He *can't* lie here! He *must* live! Don't you see what I am—if he dies?"

"Nonsense."

"It is not nonsense! Something *must* be done," imperiously. "I will go mad, if he lies here another minute!"

"Let me think."

"I don't want you to think—I want you to act! He may die while you think!"

She sprang to her feet, supple and strong, with the unforgettable grace of a wild thing. The dimness of the evening lay like a caress on her hair, blurring

the outlines of her figure in its white habit; and her face was fair—so fair that it seemed to the man's starved eyes, half-divine. Were the women of God's country all so pearly white, he wondered in intoxicated bewilderment—or had he forgotten? His eyes clung to her in famished greed, devouring her beauty with a hunger that had long been denied. He forgot the dead, he forgot the living. He forgot time and place, and past and future and eternity—until the girl put her hands suddenly before her face, with a little defensive movement, and cried passionately:

"Don't—I hate it!"

There was a note in her voice that brought Kenyon to his senses. He flushed to the very roots of his hair, and bared his head before her, saying simply:

"Forgive me—if you can. Remember, I have not seen an American woman for three years!"

Lorraine stared at him, drawing her brows together in a small frown. She scarcely comprehended the tragedy in the quiet answer. A woman never quite fathoms a man's dependence on her. Her dependence on him is part of her life. She pointed to the silent figure stretched between them.

"What will you do?" she asked imperturably. "What *can* you do?"

The officer considered all things swiftly, and in silence. He saw no reason for her ever realizing the unpleasant truth; the truth stripped of the little perversions which make it bearable.

A dead Filipino was less to him than a worthless leaf rotting on the sod. The bitter, death-cheapening hardships of the last three years had deadened his sensibilities; but he was loath to allow a weaker thing to suffer the pangs of a galling, if to him absurd, remorse.

He said quietly: "I have an escort of six men with me. They will be up directly, and can take care of—" He had almost blurted out "the body," but with swift correction supplemented "this fellow."

Lorraine heaved a sigh of great

thankfulness. Her hands gradually relaxed. With a gesture as of one who has suffered intense pain, she pressed her fingers against her temples; and then, smiling at him gratefully from under the level sweetness of her brows, she sighed again.

"Oh," she breathed; "if you could know what a joy it is just to hear you say that—to know that I—that my hands"—she held out the little, soft ringless things, as if to beg his indulgence for them—"are not stained with blood! Do you know," lifting eyes widened with excitement, "that if he had died, my hands would never have been white again? Look!" shivering, "they are spotted now—my hands!" catching a sob in her throat; "*mine!* And I have often dragged a fly out of a glass of water, because I *dared* not see it drown!"

An overwhelming pity possessed the man for the weakness that was none of his. It was as if he heard his mother's voice pleading against his little boyish cruelties. He had snared a bird once, and brought the mangled body for her to see; and he remembered how she had drawn him close to her heart; how she had looked into his eyes with her compassionate ones, and begged his pity for all weaker things.

It seemed as if he saw in this girl's face the eternal plea of all womankind to man, for mercy.

Tenderly he reached out for her hand and taking his handkerchief wiped the small stain away.

"It is not very deep," he said, smiling into her troubled eyes, "but it is vile blood to touch you! There—you are as spotless as ever. Don't draw away; I am not going to make any pretty speeches. Somehow I have forgotten how. This country robs a man of everything—even politeness."

The girl regarded him a for moment with her large, wistful eyes, and then turned them away, as if she were not pleased with what she saw.

"Are all the men over here—so bitter?" she asked wonderingly, and there was something in her tone that made Kenyon flush.

"Am I bitter?" he questioned, pausing, as if he were viewing himself for the first time; and as he spoke his eyes wandered past her to the sunken rice paddy, which had borne the corpse of many a brave man on its treacherous breast.

Kenyon laughed as he looked down on his countrywoman, secure in all her fragile, porcelain loveliness, her unstained, sheltered womanhood.

"If we are bitter," he said slowly, "perhaps we have good cause. It is not pleasant to die by the knife of a savage; to be boloed to death by black hands; to lie under this merciless sun, and fight with eternity." He threw out his hands in angry protest. "Hundreds of our men have died so—and for what?" As she lifted a thrilled face to his, he looked deep into her eyes, and it seemed for an instant as if he had kindled a responsive fire in hers.

"For what?" he repeated fiercely. "To make something out of nothing; to try to turn black into white. For this we have died, and for this we must die," he ended grimly, "but every grave will be marked with a monument of unending regret!"

Lorraine gazed at him in wonder, touched at last with understanding. That day, for the first time, she had viewed naked emotions, and it seemed as if the girl of yesterday were a vanishing shadow, who knew nothing of this woman who was face to face with the realities of life, who saw man as he was in the primitive state, strong, brave, relentless. Her ball-room partners seemed far off and absurd. They were not brutally vital; they were not clothed for service in soiled khaki, with weapons that held death in their chambers, at their belts. This thing before her was a *man!* Something to fear, something to respect, something to—love! The last word was spoken in a whisper, even to her inner consciousness; and instinctively her eyes drooped before his.

"You make me seem very small," she murmured at last, humbly. "Somehow—out here, where there are no

conventions, things assume their just proportions. You have your value, I have mine. You can fight, you can work, you can *live* for your country; I can only dance, and flirt, and weep for mine. I don't think I ever quite realized before what it meant to be a man. I beg your pardon for even attempting to judge!"

He took an impulsive step toward her, but even as he did so they heard the clink of sabres, and the rattle of equipments. The escort was approaching. He laid his hand on her arm to draw her away from the dead body, but she resisted stubbornly.

"No!" she implored. "Let me *see* that he is cared for—it means my peace of mind."

Kenyon had not dealt with women for so long that a wave of impatience possessed him. He persisted, rather dictatorially, with all the soldier's restlessness under insubordination. She resisted again, more strongly, with all a beautiful woman's petulance toward dictation.

"I beg you to come with me," he said, striving to conceal his incompetence to deal with her wilfulness.

"I beg you to allow me to stay," watching him from under the silky fringe of her lashes. Then, with an adorable little pout, "Don't be horrid!"

"Is it horrid to ask you to do something for your own good?" inquired the man helplessly.

"You know it is—the most detestable thing in all the world. No one but your enemy asks you to do things for your own good," nodding her head with irrational conviction.

A mighty furrow ploughed its way between Kenyon's brows.

"You are a very determined young lady," he remarked, smothering his annoyance, "and there is nothing you can do here. You only complicate matters. There is a hospital at San Francisco de Malabon——"

"San Francisco de Malabon!" interrupted the girl blankly. "Why, I live at San Francisco de Malabon——"

Kenyon started, and stared at her in unqualified amazement. His lips

unclosed as if to ask a question; but he closed them again, remembering. The girl hastily volunteered the unasked information.

"I am Lieutenant Edson's sister," she said eagerly, "Lorraine Edson. I came over on the *Sheridan* last week. Perhaps you know my brother," searching the strong face before her anxiously. "He is in the —th Cavalry."

Kenyon frowned. He did know her brother, and knew nothing good of him; but he controlled his surprise, and asked quickly:

"And did Edson—did your brother allow you to venture out here, *alone*?"

The girl lifted her head indignantly, with a quick defense on her lips. She looked very proud and very lovely as she faced him, and Kenyon had an insane desire to snatch her in his arms, even as the first man might have snatched the first woman, without let or hindrance; but centuries of convention had laid their mountain of control upon him, and he desisted, making one more futile effort in her behalf.

"Will you come away?" he begged, commanding her with his eyes.

"Please don't ask me, for I *cannot*!"

As they stood measuring each other's wills, as a doctor measures a patient's strength by the throbs of his pulse, the escort approached. The sergeant, giving the command to halt, dismounted and came forward. Kenyon regarded him for a moment in silence, and then gave his orders hastily.

"Sergeant, take two men and carry this Filipino into Malabon to the hospital. He is slightly wounded," with significant emphasis. "And I wish him well cared for." He fixed a warning glance on the man as he spoke, striving silently to convey his meaning without words; but strength and a superb courage, and an unquestioning obedience are the American soldier's, but he does not pretend to offer the government a deductive mind, in addition, for its pittance per month.

The man saluted, and went toward the body, two others following. Lorraine, ignoring Kenyon's detaining

hand, pressed forward, crying piteously, "Be careful, oh, be careful!"

The sergeant bent toward the dark body. There was a moment's pause, and then a stifled exclamation. Kenyon, clenching his hands, tried to draw the girl away, but she resisted.

"What is it?" she cried, trembling. "Oh, what is it?"

"Nothing," said Kenyon, almost fiercely. "Nothing—except that the sergeant will tell you what I would have spared you—that the man is dead!"

"Is it true?"

"It is true."

"Then you told me a falsehood!"

"If you put it that way—yes!"

The girl stared at him in frozen silence. She heard the soldier's curt voice repeating the hideous truth. She heard Kenyon's, "Drag him into the banana grove, there, and bury him!" She heard the heavy breathing of the men as they lifted the body. She heard—

With a low cry of anguish, she stretched out her arms as if to ward off a blow.

"How dared you?" she moaned, her voice choking her. "You knew, and you let me smile, you let me laugh, when I had done—that! I hate you!" sobbing convulsively. "You are hard and cruel; you don't care. You are *paid* to kill men! . . . Oh, don't listen to me! I don't know what I am saying! Please don't listen—"

Kenyon took her by the arm, and shook her almost roughly.

"Nonsense!" he said, trying to put some of his calm mental poise into her by mere personal contact. "Come," cheerfully, "put it away; and let me take you home. See, it is almost dark, and your brother will be worried. Be careful where you step; these fields are all mired from the rains. Let me have your hand. . . . You won't? What a veritable child you are." He smiled a little sadly; and then, as a small, cold hand was thrust passionately toward him, he laughed. "I thought I would make you give it to me."

"You did not *make* me," with sobbing

spirit; "I gave it because I wanted to—because I had to *touch* something. Oh, I can't make you understand, for war and death are natural to you. You will always *fight* for your rights, as a woman learns to gain them by coercion or—abandon them. I can never be alone in the dark again, but what that man will rise before me, and say, 'Give me back my life. It was mine. It belonged to me; you had no right to take it.'"

Kenyon bent down and took her two icy hands firmly in his. He drew her close to him, and made her look into his eyes.

"Listen," he said, in his deep voice which seemed to carry all the strength of the world in its quiet tones. "Listen, you poor child! If I could take the weight of that man's death off your tender soul, I would gladly; but he is gone, and nothing we can do will bring him back. Be brave, and face the music like a soldier. Don't lay down your arms because you are wounded. We all feel the impulse to shirk, but we all don't give in to it. I want you to help me to think for you. See, night is on us already, and we are a good six miles from the reservation. I know, if you do not, what a dangerous position you are in. We have only a small escort, and our men are attacked daily, hourly, between here and Malabon. I cannot understand," with angry impatience, "how you ever left the post without a guard."

The girl caught her breath, and lifted her beautiful, wilful eyes. "I am afraid to tell you—when you look like that," she began with the diffidence of a child repeating a poorly committed lesson. "I can see," tremulously, "that you disapprove of me—that you think me foolish, absurd, even—but I can't help it. I saddled the pony myself, and slipped away. I have never been used to being dogged by armed men. It stifles me! If I ride, if I drive, it is always the same; never a moment's freedom. Oh," throwing out her arms passionately, "this prison life is hideous! I can't breathe, I can't talk, I can't think! I *must* escape it!"

Kenyon frowned. "You seem to have succeeded to your heart's content," he observed with suppressed anger, "but I have no time to discuss it now. Show me where you have tied your horse."

She threw out her hands with a gesture of desperation.

"I have no horse!"

"What do you mean?"

"That," faltering, "I—that when I saw what I had done, I forgot to tie the pony. I just jumped off—and now," looking around wildly, "*he is gone!*"

Kenyon said "Damn!" to himself very distinctly. Aloud, he only observed with exasperated calmness:

"Then you will be compelled to ride behind me!"

"Ride—behind *you!* On *that* horse!"

"Why not? It is the only way!"

"But it is so absurd—so ridiculous!"

"It is the only way!"

There was a note in his voice that she dared resist no longer. Silently she followed him to the tree where he had tied his horse; silently he mounted and helped her up behind him; quietly he gave his orders to his men, and prepared to start.

As they turned toward Malabon, Lorraine gave a little shiver, and looked backward.

"Are you going to leave—him—there?" she asked trembling; and Kenyon answered simply,

"What else is there to do?"

She had no answer; and they rode forward.

The darkness had fallen suddenly, as it does in the tropics, and now crouched like a huge vulture over the earth, ready to devour the last faint streaks of daylight. The banana palms, exhausted from the terrific heat of the sun, drooped their leaves like tattered garments in the pulseless atmosphere. There was no movement of anything in nature. Washed to an intense, delicious green, the rice paddies lay to right and left, wandering off to meet the sea on one side and the hills on the other; and out of the velvet

softness of the sky, heralded like some empress of old by her two henchmen, the Southern Cross was slowly picking her way.

It was that elusive moment when twilight lies dying in the arms of night, and the earth in stirless silence watches the passing.

Kenyon's whole being was shaken by an unconquerable ecstasy. He could see in the darkness the white outlines of the girl's habit, and feel the frightened clutch of her two small hands on his coat. Her breath warmed his throat, and silky tendrils of her hair touched his cheek. He was afraid to move for fear he would wake and find it all a dream. He bit his lips, and closed his eyes that she might not know the strength of his emotion. He wanted to see her eyes, and hedared not turn. But what was the use of looking?—he would never forget. Surely no other woman in past or future time had ever been, or would ever be, so adorably fair. Were there other women, he wondered, who had red pouting lips, which dimpled treacherously at the corners, whose eyes reflected a hundred wilful emotions, whose voices were golden with heavenly choruses?

"Do you suppose—do you think," Lorraine questioned faintly, "that my brother—that everyone need—know?" Oh," interrupting his ready reply, "I feel as if there could never be anything in life for me again; as if I were branded as they used to brand shameful women of old. What man can ever look at me without shuddering? My hands are red with blood!"

Kenyon turned toward her, and tried to look into her face.

"Here is a man," he said slowly and impressively, "who knows, and yet would give his life for the smallest favor at those same hands. Do you believe me?"

She shook her head, struggling to keep back the tears. She had reached the point where self-control was an agony. Every nerve twitched under her sensitive skin, and it seemed as if she must scream aloud or go mad.

Instinctively the man felt this. He

pulled off his gauntlet and held out his hand.

"If your hands are stained," he said solemnly, "why, then, so are mine; for have I not——"

"*Damnation!*"

The curse cut across his voice. A volley of shell burst suddenly from the bamboo-trees lining the side of the road. There was a moment's breathless pause, a frightened cry from the girl, a stampede among the horses—and then loud and clear Kenyon's voice giving the command:

"*GALLOP!*"

Like a whirlwind the small escort swept forward, a flying speck on the grassy road.

Kenyon dug the spurs into his horse. "Keep your head low," he gasped, breathing hard. "They've attacked us, and that white skirt is a target for their fire. I don't know their strength. Close up, men, and let them have a small volley. Steady now! Hold on, Miss Edson! Don't be frightened. You are all right——"

Lorraine's cold hands clung to him spasmodically, her startled eyes staring into the death-fraught gloom. The pins tumbled from her hair, and it blew out behind her in a golden veil. The hot, perfumed air pressed against her breath, so that her voice was thread-like when she said to Kenyon in a colorless whisper,

"I suppose—this—is—retribution!"

The officer gave a short, contemptuous laugh, and cocked his revolver menacingly; but he did not answer.

There was no sound save the pounding of the horses' hoofs on the sodden road, and the occasional whizz of a bullet overhead. The enemy kept well under cover, and the darkness was so impenetrable that it seemed as if the horses were racing straight into the jaws of hell.

"If I can reach that church at the crossroads," breathed Kenyon, leaning low in his saddle and peering into the night, "we are safe! Have I missed the turn, sergeant? I can't see in this infernal light. There ought to be a bridge here——"

"There is, sir. We're almost on it now. The church is at the bend——"

Another scattered volley of shell burst around them as they surged forward. There was a sharp cry of mortal agony; and a horse fell, just as the crumbling walls of the old church loomed out of the darkness, white and still and peaceful.

Two of the men dismounted, and frantically battered in the shaky doors. Kenyon dragged the girl from her saddle, and taking her in his arms raced for cover, shouting to the men to follow. They stumbled forward in the darkness, urging their horses after them. All was confusion. Kenyon, with a sigh of relief, put Lorraine on her feet; then, holding her with his hands and looking into her eyes, he said almost fiercely:

"Are you sorry that you—*killed*—now?"

She opened her lips to speak; but at that instant a bullet shattered one of the windows, and Kenyon sprang forward to his men.

"Bar the doors!" he commanded, drawing his pistol, "and let them have a round, sergeant. We'll soon tire them out. They don't dare waste their fire." He groped his way toward the window, and taking a carbine from one of the men, broke the frail shell to a thousand pieces. "Be careful how you fire," he urged quietly. "Save every shot. They're afraid of your guns. Just wear them out!"

Lorraine stood where Kenyon had left her, her hand clutching the back of a pew. The mere darkness was fearful. Grotesque shadows seemed to leap like goblins out of the corners. At the far end of the church a faint spot of white showed, and she groped her way toward it.

It was the altar, shorn of all its holy trappings, a crumbling statue of the Virgin alone remaining, and some half-burned candles sagging in dilapidated brass sconces.

A faint streak of starlight crept through a break in the ceiling, and when the girl's eye had become accustomed to the darkness, she picked

out the details of the interior. She was naturally brave, as women count bravery, but now for the first time absolute craven fear held her in its clutches. Her trembling hands clung to the altar rail, and she stared, in white-lipped terror, at the windows where the men crouched, their guns pushed through the broken shell. Their faces were grimed with powder and distorted with the lust for blood. They loaded and re-loaded their carbines menacingly. This was war! Every shell thrust into those gleaming barrels carried death in its wake. There was no thought of mercy anywhere; it was simply a question of the survival of the fittest.

Lorraine's eyes wandered to where Kenyon stood, his figure outlined against the broken window. He had thrown off his blouse, and his white shirt clung to his great shoulders, revealing their superb strength. He was oblivious of his surroundings. He was fighting for life, as everything in nature fights for it. He was offering his body dauntlessly to the enemy. A stray bullet might make it a thing of naught, might tear his strength from him, and rob him of his usefulness. Was it any wonder that he held life cheaply? He had measured its worth.

Lorraine clenched her hands together in desperation. She was face to face with the great issues of life, and the scales were dropping from before her eyes. Instinctively she was beginning to realize that there must be death that there may be life; that man preys upon man, beast upon beast; that the eternal fitness of things demands that a soul must go out that a soul may come in; that the lower must pass that the higher survive.

Trembling, she crept forward, with a half-defined horror of the sheltered background. If death must come, she would face it like a man, with her face to the front, soldier-wise. She would not skulk in the shadows. She told herself that she had no fear, but her face was waxen white, and unconsciously her hands sought her ears to keep out the report of the guns. Hissing

bullets buried themselves in the crumbling walls of the church, and the smell of smoke stifled her.

Kenyon was hurling his orders into the uproar. "Keep your cartridges, men!" he shouted. "Don't waste a shot!—Ah! that one told!" as a howl of mortal agony rang against the stone walls. "God! If I could send them all to Kingdom Come—"

As he spoke a bullet grazed his shoulder, and struck a man behind. The poor fellow fell with a groan to the floor, and Kenyon, snatching his carbine, recklessly reloaded it. The hot blood was staining his sleeve, but he felt only a supreme exultation.

"Let them come on!" he shouted with the lust of battle in his voice. "Come on, you devils! Come out of the brush where we can see you—"

He had forgotten everything in the world except fight! The frenzy of battle was in his face—the fever in his veins; when suddenly, out of the darkness, like a streak of lightning in a midnight sky, a figure in white sprang rigidly. A gold head spotted the shadow, and two frenzied hands pressed themselves against the blood that was flowing from his arm.

"Kill them!" panted Lorraine deliriously, "kill them for me! O God! if I were a *man*—"

Even at that moment, with death battering at the door, Kenyon turned, and looked into her face. It was convulsed and distorted with the lust for revenge and death that was in his own heart!

"You understand!" he stammered, fierce joy shaking his voice. "You understand—*now!*"

"I understand!" she answered him slowly; "I understand—*yes!*" And before his pulses had steadied, her lips had brushed his hand. Time was as naught; and he was facing the summation of his life, the fulfilment of his most secret dreams, as he looked into her eyes!

His voice leapt to meet the enchantment in her face.

"If we live," he cried, ecstatic fever raising his voice above the noise of the

bullets, "if we live—could you ever—care?"

"If we live—" she answered him steadily, "if we live—" And then her voice broke and she fled to the altar and with a great sob fell on her knees before the silent statue of Mary.

"Forgive me!" she importuned chokingly, "that I ever wanted to spare one of those—fiends! Let him kill them all—all! And oh, if it is true that you intercede for women in sorrow, save him for me! Save—him—for—me—"

The silver starlight touched the face of the Virgin tenderly, and to the girl's strained eyes it seemed to beam with ineffable hope and pity. She dropped lower and lower, until she lay outstretched on the cold stone of the steps, crushing her hands against her ears to keep out the sounds that, waking or sleeping, would haunt her while life lingered in her body. A sluggish calm seemed to have settled over all her limbs. A bullet splintered the floor at her feet, and ruffled her skirt, but she only shrank a little, and covered her white face. Death had come so near that she had no fear to greet him with; only a great calm and a wordless protest. She longed for a little peace of any sort—a little rest. The moments were so long. . . .

A streak of light crept toward her figure uncertainly, and touched her

hair. She raised herself, and stared toward the windows. Was that rosy glow dawn? Dawn! She dragged herself closer to the altar, and stumbled to her feet. Why was everything suddenly so still? Was this death?

She put the falling hair from her eyes and stared about her. She took a step forward in the darkness.

There was an intoxicated shout of triumph from somewhere, a laugh even, and then her lover, throwing away his carbine, staggered to her. He was grimed with powder, and his clothes were clotted with blood—but he was *alive!*

She raised her eyes to his face. "Is it done?" she asked dreamily. And then, as his strong voice answered her, "It is done!" she lifted herself, and he clasped his arms about her and held her up against his breast. His hands pressed her face, white as drifted sea-foam, to his, that he might miss no breath of the love that had been born there.

She unclosed her lips, and her timid hands touched his coat.

"Beloved!" he asked unsteadily, "what is it?"

"Nothing," she answered; and her voice was a thread of cloying sweetness, "nothing. I was only thanking God that my hands are clean—and that—He—has shown me—You!"



COMPLEX PROPOSITION

"DO you think life is really worth living, old man?"

"No; I decided that long ago in the negative. But then another question arises—is death worth dying? So what are we to do?"



TRACING AUTHORSHIP

MRS. GATES—Who said "God give us men"?

GATES—Some woman.

AS TOLD BY RENAUD'S WIFE

By Anne Warner

“**V**OILÀ!” she leaned forward and glanced out of the window, then, nodding, “Yes, it is Varel. Ah, the poor man!”

I looked after the great painter as he crossed beneath the interweaving shadows of the lindens, his bowed head and stooped shoulders more bowed and more stooping than ever, and my look spoke my interest, even if my tongue was dumb.

She—Madame Renaud—caught the look with its question and replied straightway, half-smiling, half-sighing:

“And yet he was blithe and young once, monsieur. Ah, yes, young and blithe and good to look upon—so good to look upon. And in but one day it all changed—all changed—*et pour toujours*. Would one believe it? And yet it is so.”

She paused and sighed, turned the child in her arms so that its sleep was yet further eased, and looked with sweetly saddened eyes where the figure of Varel was fast disappearing among the court shrubberies. I turned my eyes toward her, expectant, waiting, and after a minute she went on:

“It was in Paris, monsieur, years and years ago. We all lived there. Julien (Varel's first name is Julien, you know), and his sister, and Renaud (he was not my husband then), and myself. That was how I first came to know them all—the three others. We were four young people and we were dear friends. The sister of Varel was such a pretty girl—but so frail. I may tell monsieur in utter truth that one may not be so frail and lost in Paris. Paris takes strength and it had been a hard struggle. For a long, long time, too. He—

Varel—had copied papers and done all manner of things so that they might live and so that he might continue to paint. She worked in a shop, braiding straw. Not good pay, but not hard work. She was not fit for hard work, oh, *la pauvre petite!* I do not know just what hardships had been survived before, but when I came into the adjoining mansard they were yet many. I was their neighbor for several months before Renaud's arrival. That was when he had the idea of being a painter also—*Dieu*, what labor he did there—until God in His infinite mercy saw fit to take his father, when this property naturally—but *la*, that is altogether another part of the story.

“Varel and his sister were very poor and yet not altogether miserable. There were days when a little pleasure might be permitted, and on such days we four went up the river into the fresh air to enjoy the green that, to my thinking, is quite as truly heaven's color as the blue above us. On such days we laughed and sang and forgot our narrow windows and our narrow means, and Varel used to be the gayest of all—very different from what he is now. He would joke merrily and make little poesies on his sister's hair, and my eyes, and Renaud would applaud and we would all enjoy every sweet minute as it passed. And when we were quiet he used to make sketches of the trees and skies and of ourselves, and they were so true that even I—who understand nothing of pictures—was lost in a wonder of admiration for his.

“I have one in my Bible now of Lotte (his sister's name was Lotte) and Renaud, sitting together beneath the wil-

lows at Neudon. He often drew Lotte and Renaud together—it was but natural that he should. Lotte was so delicate and Renaud always guarded her weakness as a father might have done. It was he who cared for her footsteps and I only loved him the better for it. It never came to me to feel otherwise. Why should I have felt otherwise? Even then, in the first days of our knowing one another, was it not in his eyes for me—for me alone? Did he not tell me—but there! that is no part of this!

"It was the second Winter after the begining that the end approached—the altering of Varel. It was the Prize that did it. Monsieur knows how the Prize comes into the veins as a fever, and how it drives the students mad and is bread and sleep to them for weeks often and often. If it was a fever to the rest, it was a delirium to Julien, and monsieur divines why—because he might not hope. He might only think and dream of the Winter in Italy, and the possibilities and the honor! There was no help—oh, that poor, so poor boy! . . .

"Monsieur, he hoped not and yet he planned his picture—the 'Fleur Voilée,' monsieur has seen it? I too. Ah, we wept, Renaud and I. We were in Paris the year after and we stood before it and wept—Renaud and I. He is so sensitive and tender-hearted—*mon bon Renaud!* So sensitive and tender-hearted! Never calf goes to market but— Ah, I wander again.

"Monsieur, it was an occasion for despair—the way that Varel felt about that picture! He craved to do it with his whole heart and soul—aye, and with his stomach, too, for, had he been alone, he would gladly have starved to pay a model to sit for him as others—many, many others—have done before him. But *Dieu! Dieu!* that Winter he could pay nothing. He was not alone, and we—all we who were not rich—were like to freeze. It was wood and wood, and yet once more wood—no single sou for anything else. But, although the spirit of Julien shone in misery back of the bigness of his eyes, yet he labored

in silence and we only knew of the cry within him because it was there and one heard it in the air itself.

"It was for that they were so wretched—the two Varels—that when the news of the illness of Renaud's father came, we smothered it between us, Renaud and I. I said to him, 'If you come to be able you will surely give to them, and so why dazzle their eyes when it is so possible that your father may recover, after all.' Renaud saw the wisdom of that and took my advice. He has such an opinion of my wisdom and advice—monsieur can hardly conceive. Why, only last week when it was a question of blue or red tiles he—but how I run on, forgetting all that I set out to tell!

"Still, anyone could see how Julien was riven with his desire to paint, and it was then that Lotte came to me. She was so timid and quiet—*la petite Lotte*. I always called her '*la petite*,' and felt thus toward her, although Renaud declares I was then as small and as slight myself. She trembled and hesitated that day until my mind came to dread a thousand catastrophes, and then at last she told me her errand, and monsieur must believe that my heart choked me as I listened and understood. You see, it was her brother who was dearest of all on earth to her, and she was half wild because if he had not herself to feed and warm, he might pay the model and compete for the Prize. I can see the poor innocent now—down at my knees, her tears shaking her from head to feet—and it was all so true, so pitifully true—and I knew it was true, and she knew that I knew also.

"But still I tried to comfort her, and it was while I had my arms about her and her face was looking up from my bosom that she went on and told me what she was thinking of. She said that the idea had come to her after prayer, so she was sure that it was one of the sending of Sainte Hélène, and then she made me understand that she wished herself to sit to her brother as a model. Monsieur can guess my surprise—and it was not until she re-

minded me of Julien's plan for the picture that I saw how possible it was. It was a daring plan, monsieur recollects, the figure lying enwrapped like a flower, with its face and hands hidden by the drooping roses. Renaud had his doubts at first when Julien used to talk of it—but *la!* time has shown forth many things since then.

"I may say with my hand on my heart that to me the idea appeared beautiful from the beginning, and it was as if it had been made to fit Lotte's desire, for anything more flower-like than her form could not be imagined. And so I told her frankly, and when she told me that she wanted me to go myself to Varel and tell him that one, *jeune, belle, toute-inconnue*, would pose for him, if she might rest with her face veiled and never be called upon to speak, I embraced the poor child and promised her—and then we wept freely together.

"I told Renaud that night and he also was deeply moved. His father was somewhat better, and he had been much cast down—seeing plainly that our marriage must be long put off—but he put his own trouble aside and spoke so kindly—so comfortingly to me. *Mon Dieu*, but he is an angel—Renaud! The night that our fourth child had the croup—ah, I wish monsieur might have noted Renaud that night. But, thank God, it is not of the croup that I must speak now.

"And so I was to take the good news to the *pauvre garçon*, and the very next afternoon, about five, I saw, as I was returning from carrying six finished skirts, the reflection of Julien's light against the window-pane. I knew that he must be alone there because Lotte never reached home until very near seven, and so I felt that here was my most excellent chance, and after I had mounted the stairs, I went straight to his door and rapped. He cried to me 'Come in,' and when I obeyed and he saw who it was, he looked as pleased as if he had known my errand beforehand. I never had seen him so pleased before, and I may truly remark that I never have seen him so pleased since.

Pleased since! Ah, God's mercy, if I have ever seen him more than smile since! He—but the story will explain!

"Well, and so he made me sit on the chair and he sat on the table and laughed and talked—poor fellow—and it was several minutes before I remembered of what I had come to speak, for he was really quite gay—that is, always gay for Varel, you comprehend. And then, when the pause came, and I might speak, will monsieur believe that I hardly knew how to word the matter? I am older now, but monsieur can understand that it really was quite a delicate affair for me, a young girl (and I was different then from what I am now—oh, very different; Renaud used to say—but we'll leave that). At any rate, I felt myself blushing and stammering most awkwardly, and it was only after Julien had helped me out with an infinity of patience that I made the whole clear to his mind.

"Monsieur, I may in absolute confession state that I have never seen anyone so deeply affected. He became very pale. He rose and walked up and down for some time. I almost began to fear he was displeased at the condition. But at last he came beside the table, and, in a voice that trembled, he said to me, 'Marguerite, I can never forget this hour. Say to the angel who hath sent thee that I will never seek to know her, nor to speak to her; that I will never approach her or touch her, but that to the last day of my life I shall pray for her night and morning, and in every church past which my steps shall lead me.'

"I was much touched myself. I wept. Later we spoke calmly and seriously, and I arranged with him that she should come on Saturdays and Sundays. I hope that I shall not appear selfish if I say that this arrangement was a very convenient thing for Renaud and me, for it gave us a liberty together which we had never had before, and monsieur can well believe that in spite of that Winter's cold we enjoyed our walks and our plans as to the future. You see, our affairs had taken a turn for the better—Renaud's

father receiving a fresh shock in March—and we felt we might dare to look in windows and contemplate pots and spoons, and hope—but, oh, *ciel*, how my tongue runs!

"So Varel began his picture. Poor Lotte had bound her head up so tightly that she could hardly breathe, and the long, gauze draperies covered her straw-worn hands (for Julien would have recognized her hands as quick as her face—of such attention are artists) as closely as they sheathed her beautiful figure. And thus she posed hour after hour in the cold chill of that garret. Her brother worked as he had never worked before. He painted as if possessed by a god. She told me that he was a new being to her, he whistled so merrily, sang little love-songs, but never, never addressed her one word. You see, he thought that Lotte was away with Renaud and me, and his mind was free of all care and floated along in the paradise of his wish fulfilled. He had posed her as a flower, dew-laden and swept about by the morning mist, and she lay stretched out upon the green, a rose—a rose enwrapped in the rose of its own color. Monsieur can think what she must have been when the picture was what it was. No wonder Varel worked as one inspired.

"Of course, with only two sittings a week it took time. An artist should have his model oftener. I remember when Renaud was going to paint his 'Goose of the Golden Egg,' he expressly stipulated that he was to have the goose four mornings a week. And even with that, the picture never—but I have taken a vow never to refer to the 'Goose with the Golden Egg.' If monsieur has ever occasion to visit the loft over the wagon-house he may see for himself.

"But at last the painting approached its end. Lotte had grown very pale, but not even to me would she admit that she felt ill. I said to Renaud that I sadly feared Varel was mixing his paints with blood, but he said that the Spring would bring back her color. He is always so hopeful—*le* Renaud! I

have never seen such hope. Five sons before a daughter and never one breath of despair from that noble heart, and now for seven seasons has he not attempted to raise—but oh, *Dieu*, my tongue! my tongue!

"Then came the day when it went off to the competition, and the day after Lotte laid herself down upon her bed. If she was ill!—but you should have seen her. She was white as wax and weak as a babe.

"She lay there—ah, the poor one—and I nursed her every minute that I was not absolutely forth with my shirts. And Julien nursed her, too, he on one side of the bed, I on the other, hour after hour. How his eyes sought mine continually, imploring me to save her! Shall I ever forget his eyes as they were then before they changed? They cried—they burned. The sweet, poor, dear fellow! He was never stout and well-built like Renaud, but he had charms. One must admit that he had charms. I used sometimes to think—but no—no, never!

"It was not for long, as you may imagine. She faded pitifully fast. Soon she faded altogether. He wept in my arms. He clung to me. He even kissed me—it was a comfort that I could not deny him. I dressed her myself, and truly she was most beautiful. I had to support him as he looked upon her for the last time. Renaud went with him to bury her. I wept all the time while they were gone. When they came back the letter was there.

"He only glanced at the envelope, and then he fled to his own room. Renaud took me into his arms to soothe me. I was much agitated; monsieur can understand how deep an interest we felt. Never shall I forget those moments as we waited—and then, while we were waiting, the telegram regarding Renaud's father came. Such a mingling of joy and sorrow never was! I could only smile for one while I wiped my tears for the other. Life is like that, monsieur—the same rain that makes the harvest, kills the tender young turkeys. *Eh bien*, Renaud's duty called him to his father at once,

of course, and I remained alone divided between sad and sweet thoughts. Losing a parent is always a heavy grief, naturally, but inheriting—ah, *c'est quelqu' chose!*

"It was then that poor Julien came in to tell me that he had taken the prize. He knelt down at my feet and laid his head against my knee and told me. 'You should know first, Marguerite,' he whispered. 'Who have I now but you? Ah, if only Lotte—' his voice broke there and I was overcome, too.

"*'La pauvre chère Lotte!'* I cried, when I could speak at last, 'could she but know!—for she gave her life for this!'

"'Her life?' he questioned, lifting up his head and fixing his eyes on mine. And it seemed only justice then to reveal the secret to him.

"Ah, monsieur, what emotion! He started to his feet and for a few minutes there was an air about him of frozen madness. I found myself wholly unable to bear it. I went to him; I put my arms about him; I said to him, 'Julien, it is terrible. Yes, it is very terrible. But such was her will; she would have it so. She was weak and ailing, life meant little to her. She was always a thing of pain—now she is free. God's will be ours.' But he only stood there, staring blind and blank at the floor.

"Then I saw that I must rouse him, and a sudden inspiration seized me. I knew that Renaud loved him and sorrowed for him even as I did myself, and I knew that anything that we could offer we would offer out of full hearts. So I took his hands in mine and pressing them hard I said, 'Tiens, Julien, look at me. While we are young there is always something left. Listen to me.' He raised his big, sad eyes to mine and I saw a sudden gladness flashing in their depths. I clasped his hands yet more warmly then—and I said:

"'Julien, Renaud and I are to be married shortly. Leave Paris and its stones of hearts and feet and come and live with us in the sweet breath and

bloom of the country. We will take you to our hearts as a brother. It shall be home to you as long as you will. Only come.'

"Oh, monsieur, that was a moment!

"On my death-bed I shall hear again the scream he gave. It was the real madness that came to him in that instant. Lack of food and fire, work and other work, anxiety misery, his sister's death—the Prize—it all came over him at once!

"He struck his hands to his head and rushed from me, and neither Renaud nor I saw him again for years. . .

"It was when we decided to name the sixth boy Julien that Renaud finally wrote him a letter. He hesitated somewhat because he was become 'Varel, *tout-court*,' in the years between, but I urged the letter and it went. Varel sent the little one a silver bowl and in the Midsummer he came to see us. Of course, we were deeply honored, but we were still more shocked. It was ten years ago, and yet I may assure monsieur that he was as gray and bent and broken then as now. It was frightful to see! And other things followed. Monsieur has doubtless heard it rumored that the mind of the great man—? Terrible, is it not?—but between you and me, Renaud and I cannot doubt it. My little Marguerite was three years old that Summer, and the night after he came, he woke us all, crying her name in his sleep. I was sadly alarmed, thinking it was a summons from above for the dear child; monsieur knows how such things have been. But the next night it was worse yet, and then Renaud moved him out into the maisonette, telling him that the children would not wake him up out there at night. Renaud has such delicacy—he never hinted to him that then he would not wake us up either. He liked the maisonette—*le pauvre Varel*. (I trust monsieur will pardon me; I always forget how great a man he is and feel for him a pity *tout simple*.) And he drew things all over the walls and ever since then we have kept it for him alone. He comes quite frequently and spends a few days there when

wearied of Paris. It is the highest possible honor for us, although I may frankly say that occasionally I find the way he looks at me to be somewhat *ennuyante*. Monsieur can understand that the mistress of this place and the mother of eight children must often find herself as to coiffure and dress quite otherwise than she would wish to be in the eyes of an artist. But I never say a word. If it gives the poor man a little joy to stare at one who recalls to him his

sister and his youth he is gladly welcome to stare. Renaud says that he stares because I am yet beautiful and he an artist. But oh, la! that Renaud—he is an idiot always about his wife, and truly she—

“But I hope that I have not bored monsieur?” She stopped short and looked earnestly into my face.

I leaned my elbows on the window-seat and shook my head.

“Bored? No, truly!”



BALLADE OF THE ONE TRUE LOVE

By Gordon Wilson

OF all the maids a man may know,
Only to one can he be true:
With her alone, where'er he go,
Will he consent to bill and coo:
No other maiden will he woo,
But cleaves with faithfulness sublime
And worshipful devotion, to
The girl who's nearest at the time.

'Mid tropic heat or Arctic snow,
In Paris or in Timbuctoo,
To one alone he's faithful, though
Some other maid be fair to view.
As swift as Cupid's darts e'er flew,
His thoughts will fly, whate'er the clime,
To Zaidee—Gladys—Fifi—Prue—
The girl who's nearest at the time.

She may have millions to bestow;
She may be poor (but honest), too;
He does not care—come weal or woe,
For her affection will he sue.
Her charms and graces may be few;
But, be she “second-class” or “prime,”
He'll tell his tale of love unto
The girl who's nearest at the time.

L'ENVOI

Princess, with eyes of brown (or blue),
I fondly dedicate this rhyme
To you—*pro tempore*, to you—
The girl who's nearest at the time!